

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan For Montana FFY 2016-2018

1 Define CCDF Leadership and Coordination with Relevant Systems

Implementation of the requirements of the CCDBG Act of 2014 will require leadership and coordination between the child care assistance program and other child- and family-serving agencies, services, and supports at the state and local levels. ACF recognizes that each grantee must identify the most appropriate entities and individuals to lead and participate in implementation based on the context within that State or Territory. This will include those that manage various components of CCDF-funded activities and requirements (fiscal, subsidy, health and safety monitoring, and continuous quality improvement) as well as other public and private partners.

This section collects information to help ACF understand the stakeholders convened and consulted to develop the Plan, where authority lies to make policy decisions and program changes, and who is responsible for implementing the blueprint for action the Plan describes. For example, the law requires that, at the option of the Tribes, State/Territory Lead Agencies must collaborate and coordinate with Indian tribes or tribal organizations in the State in a timely manner in the development of the CCDF Plan. ACF expects that new requirements in the law will necessitate that grantees build partnerships with other agencies and organizations to better link the children and families receiving financial assistance to information, services and resources regarding other programs for which they may be eligible, including developmental screenings for children, and other resources (also in section 2). In addition, States and Territories must describe how public-private partnerships are being used to increase the supply and quality of child care services.

1.1 CCDF Leadership

The Governor of a State or Territory shall designate an agency (which may be an appropriate collaborative agency), or establish a joint inter-agency office, to represent the State (or Territory) as the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency agrees to administer the program in accordance with applicable Federal laws and regulations and the provisions of this Plan, including the assurances and certifications appended hereto. (658D, 658E(c)(1))

1.1.1 Which Lead Agency is designated to administer the CCDF program?

Identify the Lead Agency or joint inter-agency office designated by the State/Territory. ACF will send official grant correspondence such as grant awards, grant adjustments, Plan approvals, and disallowance notifications to the designated contact identified here. (658D(a))

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Name of Lead Agency: [Department of Public Health and Human Services](#)

Address of Lead Agency: [P.O. Box 4210, Helena, MT 59604-4210](#)

Name and Title of the Lead Agency Official: [Richard Oppen, Director](#)

Phone Number: [406-444-5622](#)

E-Mail Address: roppen@mt.gov

Web Address for Lead Agency (if any): <http://dphhs.mt.gov/>

1.1.2 Who is the CCDF administrator?

Identify the CCDF administrator designated by the Lead Agency, the day-to-day contact, with responsibility for administering the State/Territory's CCDF program. ACF will send programmatic communications such as program announcements, program instructions, and data collection instructions to the designated contact identified here. If there is more than one designated contact with equal or shared responsibility for administering the CCDF program, please identify the co-administrator or entity with administrative responsibilities and include contact information.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) Contact Information for CCDF Administrator:

Name of CCDF Administrator: [Patty Butler](#)

Title of CCDF Administrator: [Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief](#)

Address of CCDF Administrator: [P.O. Box 202925, Helena, MT 59620-2925](#)

Phone Number: [406-444-1828](tel:406-444-1828)

E-Mail Address: pbutler@mt.gov

b) Contact Information for CCDF Co-Administrator (if applicable):

Name of CCDF Co-Administrator:

Title of CCDF Co-Administrator:

Phone Number:

E-Mail Address:

Description of the role of the Co-Administrator:

c) Primary Contact Information for the CCDF Program:

Phone Number for CCDF program information (for the public) (if any): [\(406\) 444-1788](tel:406-444-1788)

Web Address for CCDF program (for the public) (if any):
<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx>

Web Address for CCDF program policy manual (if any):
<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx>

Web Address for CCDF program administrative rules (if any):
<http://www.mtrules.org/gateway/ChapterHome.asp?Chapter=37%2E80>

1.1.3 Identify the agency/department/entity that is responsible for each of the major parts of CCDF administration and the name of the lead contact responsible for managing this portion of the Plan.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Outreach and Consumer Education (section 2)

Agency/Department/Entity [DPHHS/Early Childhood Services Bureau/Quality CCDF Program](#)

Name of Lead Contact [Leslie Lee, Child Care Quality Program Manager](#)

Subsidy/Financial Assistance (section 3 and section 4)

Agency/Department/Entity [DPHHS/Early Childhood Services Bureau/Child Care CCDF Program](#)

Name of Lead Contact [Carrie Leu, Child Care Program Manager](#)

Licensing/Monitoring (section 5)

Agency/Department/Entity [DPHHS/Quality Assurance Division/Child Care Licensing Program](#)

Name of Lead Contact [Becky Fleming-Siebenaler, Licensure Bureau Chief](#)

Child Care Workforce (section 6)

Agency/Department/Entity [Montana State University/Early Childhood Project](#)

Name of Lead Contact [Libby Hancock, Director](#)

Quality Improvement (section 7)

Agency/Department/Entity [DPHHS/Early Childhood Services Bureau/Quality CCDF Program](#)

Name of Lead Contact [Leslie Lee, Child Care Quality Program Manager](#)

Grantee Accountability/Program Integrity (section 8)

Agency/Department/Entity [DPHHS/Early Childhood Services Bureau/Child Care CCDF Program](#)

Name of Lead Contact [Carrie Leu, Child Care Program Manager](#)

1.2 CCDF Policy Decision Authority

The Lead Agency has broad authority to administer (i.e., establish rules) and operate (i.e., implement activities) the CCDF program through other governmental, non-governmental, or other public or private local agencies as long as it retains overall responsibility for the administration of the program. (658D(b))

1.2.1 Which of the following CCDF program rules and policies are set or established at the State/Territory versus the local level?

In other words, identify whether CCDF program rules and policies are established by the state or territory (even if administered or operated locally) or whether the CCDF policies or rules are established by local entities (such as counties or workforce boards) setting those policies. Check one.

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- ☒ All program rules and policies are set or established at the State/Territory level.
- ☐ Some or all program rules and policies are set or established by local entities. If checked, indicate which entities establish the following policies. Check all that apply.
- ☐ Eligibility rules and policies (e.g., income limits) are set by the:
- ☐ State/Territory
 - ☐ County.
- If checked, describe the type of eligibility policies the county can set
- ☐ Other local entity (e.g., workforce boards, early learning coalitions).
- If checked, identify the entity (e.g. workforce board) and describe the type of eligibility policies the local entity(ies) can set
- ☐ Other.
- Describe:
- ☐ Sliding fee scale is set by the:

☐ State/Territory

☐ County

If checked, describe the type of sliding fee scale policies the county can set

☐ Other local entity (e.g., workforce boards, early learning coalitions).

If checked, identify the entity (e.g. workforce board) and describe the type of sliding fee scale policies the local entity(ies) can set

☐ Other.

Describe:

☐ Payment rates are set by the:

☐ State/Territory

☐ County.

If checked, describe the type of payment rate policies the county can set

☐ Other local entity (e.g., workforce boards, early learning coalitions).

If checked, identify the entity (e.g. workforce board) and describe the type of payment rate policies the local entity(ies) can set

☐ Other.

Describe:

☐ Other.

List and describe (e.g., quality improvement systems, payment practices):

1.2.2 How is the CCDF program operated in your State/Territory?

In other words, which agency(ies) implement or perform these CCDF services and activities and how will the State/Territory ensure that Federal CCDF requirements are fully implemented by other governmental or nongovernmental agencies. ACF recommends minimizing differences in eligibility or other policies across counties or other jurisdictions to ease family burden and confusion. Check all that apply. and describe the services performed by the entity and how the

State/Territory ensures accountability that federal requirements are fully implemented by other agency(ies).

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a) Who determines eligibility?

☒ CCDF Lead Agency

☒ TANF agency

Describe.

The TANF agency determines the rules and laws related to TANF child care and Working Caretaker Relative Child Care in coordination with the CCDF lead agency, as both agencies have applicable rules and policies. Eligibility for TANF is determined by the TANF agency and referrals are issued to local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

☒ Other State/Territory agency.

Describe.

Child & Family Services makes referrals for eligible Child Protective Services children.

☐ Local government agencies such as county welfare or social services departments

Describe.

☒ Child care resource and referral agencies

Describe.

Child Protective Services Foster Children are referred by the State Child Protective Services office and social workers to local Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Agencies for the CCR&Rs to determine eligibility.

☐ Community-based organizations

Describe.

☐ Other.

Describe.

b) Who assists parents in locating child care (consumer education)?

☒ CCDF Lead Agency

☒ TANF agency

Describe.

The WoRC Case Managers assist the family in locating available child care by offering information for a child care referral and by giving the parent a toll free number and an available website.

☒ Other State/Territory agency.

Describe.

Child & Family Services makes referrals for eligible Child Protective Services children.

☐ Local government agencies such as county welfare or social services departments

Describe.

☒ Child care resource and referral agencies

Describe.

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies are located in 7 regions in Montana. They provide access for parents in locating child care as a part of the services they contract for. Information is stored in the NACCRAWARE data base. The agencies have experience in analyzing data and have the capacity to provide referrals to families based on location, children's age(s), special needs, and program size. Toll free numbers, extended work hours, websites, and child care licensing portal information are some of the strategies to support families as they seek child care.

☐ Community-based organizations

Describe.

☐ Other.

Describe.

c) Who issues payments?

☒ CCDF Lead Agency

☐ TANF agency

Describe.

☐ Other State/Territory agency.

Describe.

☐ Local government agencies such as county welfare or social services departments

Describe.

☐ Child care resource and referral agencies

Describe.

☐ Community-based organizations

Describe.

☐ Other.

Describe.

1.3 Consultation in the Development of the State Plan

The Lead Agency is responsible for developing the CCDF plan which serves as the application for a three-year implementation period. In the development of the CCDF plan, the Lead Agency shall consult with appropriate representatives of units of general purpose local government. (658D(b)(2)) General purpose local governments is defined by the U.S. Census at https://www.census.gov/newsroom/cspan/govts/20120301_cspan_govts_def_3.pdf The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a requirement that States consult with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (pursuant to 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act). 658E(c)(2)(R) In addition, States shall, at the option of an Indian tribe or tribal organization in the State, collaborate and coordinate with such Indian tribe or tribal organization in the development of the State plan in a timely manner. (658D (b)(1)(E))

1.3.1 Check who and describe how the Lead Agency consulted with these entities in the development of the CCDF Plan (check all that apply).

For example, did the entity participate in a drafting committee, review drafts, sign off on the final version, or develop a memorandum of understanding with the Lead Agency to meet requirements to share information or services for CCDF subsidy families, or other manner of participation? This list includes entities required by law along with a list of optional CCDF Plan consultation partners that Lead Agencies potentially would consult with in their developing their CCDF Plan.

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☒ [REQUIRED] Appropriate representatives of general purpose local government, which can include counties, municipalities or townships/towns

Describe:

During the fall of 2015, staff from the Early Childhood Services Bureau and Quality Assurance Division traveled across the state. They met with over 800 people in various communities to inform them about the state plan and what it means to Montana.

The following shows the schedule of community forum visits:

Bozeman, November 9

Great Falls, November 12

Miles City, November 16

Billings, November 17

Missoula, November 23

Helena*, December 1


**State-wide WebEx. All Resource and Referral Agencies will participate and provide meeting space for this call for their communities*

Throughout the forums, questions were asked, and were responded to with a CCDF Frequently Asked Questions document, which can be found on the lead agency's website for CCDF: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/CCDBGActof2014>.

The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and

meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given.

Complementing the work being done at the state level, are local Best Beginnings coalitions. There are 20 local coalitions statewide. The local coalitions are working to increase coordination across child serving systems at the grass roots level in towns, counties, and regions. Members of local coalitions are present at the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. Local coalition members report back to their local coalitions about the work being done at the state level, including the development of Montana's State Plan. Local coalition membership includes members of local government, including the Chamber of Commerce, County Attorney's Office, Commissioners, and local police and fire departments.

 [REQUIRED IF APPLICABLE] State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (pursuant to 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act).

Describe:

The lead agency works with the statewide Best Beginnings Advisory Council to receive policy recommendations including rule revisions, system development, and quality and training initiatives. Together, the lead agency through the advice of the Council will develop, implement, maintain, and evaluate the effectiveness of the state's child care programs.

The Best Beginnings Advisory Council serves as the state's comprehensive early childhood advisory council and will serve as the collaborating entity for the early childhood system. The council includes representation from interested constituency groups, governmental agencies, the public at large, child care providers, state and local government, and tribal communities.

The council's work will focus on creating a statewide plan for a comprehensive early childhood service system that will assist in the four principal objectives:

1. Children will have access to high quality early childhood programs.
2. Families with young children will have community support.
3. Children will have access to a medical home and health insurance.
4. Improving the social, emotional, and mental health needs of young children and families.

The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion

following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

If checked, does the Lead Agency have official representation and a decision-making role in the State Advisory Council?

☒ Yes,

☐ No.

If no State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (pursuant to 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act) exists in your State/Territory, describe how you consulted with any other state- or state-designated cross-agency body such as an advisory council, cross-agency commission, or council or cabinet related to child and family planning and policy

☒ [REQUIRED] Indian tribe(s) and/or tribal organization(s), at the option of individual Tribes.

Describe, including which Tribe(s) you consulted with

There are representatives from 3 of the 7 tribes on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The council is working to fill the other 4 tribal vacancies. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members. A Tribal CCDF member with the Northern Cheyenne Tribe participated in work groups focused on developing policies and procedures for special needs, expulsion/suspension, and homeless children and families.

Other examples of consultation with tribal organizations include:

- Two members of Northern Cheyenne attended the State Plan Public Hearing.
- MOU's and/or agreements are in place through the CCR&R for services related to the State Plan.
- The Child Care Specialist from Northern Cheyenne and the Bureau Chief met to share Market Rate information and health and safety plans.
- A formal Tribal Consultation was held in April after the initial State Plan was submitted in which the Plan was shared and conversations were held with 7 tribes about the 3 year plan. As a result a meeting is planned for all CCDF

Administrators in Montana to discuss the State Plan implementations.

- A call including the National Tribal Center T/TA and the 477 Employment and Training Director, as well as the Child Care Manager from Fort Belknap was held in April to discuss shared training opportunities and the health and safety regulations in the State Plan.

☐ Check N/A if no Indian Tribes and/or Tribal organizations in the State

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for public education.

Describe:

Several representatives from the Office of Public Instruction are present at the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given.

Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members. Representation from Part B IDEA, and the McKinney-Vento State Coordinator with the Office of Public Instruction participated in work groups focused on developing policies and procedures for special needs, expulsion/suspension, and homeless children and families.

☒ State agency/agencies responsible for programs for children with special needs, including early intervention programs authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Part C for infants and toddlers and Section 619 for preschool).

Describe:

A representative from the Developmental Services Division attends the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

Part C, Part B IDEA, and the Office of Public Instruction Early Grades Specialist participated in a work group that focused on developing policies and procedures for special needs. The goal of this work group, aside from policy development for the state plan, was to connect services between multiple agencies that support children with special needs. Part of the work group's assignments was to develop a definition of special needs, and procedures around meeting the needs of children with special needs.

☒ State/Territory institutions for higher education, including community colleges.

Describe:

Representatives from Early Childhood Higher Education and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education attend the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for child care licensing.

Describe:

Child Care Licensing was part of the core group of programs responsible with developing Montana's State Plan. They attended Community Forums in November and December of 2015 alongside the Early Childhood Services Bureau to inform the public of the Reauthorization Act and 2016-2018 State Plan.

A representative from Child Care Licensing attends the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members. The Quality Assurance Division - Child Care Licensing participated in work groups focused on developing policies and procedures for special needs, expulsion/suspension, and homeless children and families.

☒ State/Territory office/director for Head Start State collaboration

Describe:

Representatives from the Head Start State Collaboration Office and the Head Start Association attend the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members. The Head Start State Collaboration Director participated in work groups focused on developing policies and procedures for special needs, expulsion/suspension, and homeless children and families.

The Head Start State Collaboration Office is part of the Early Childhood Services Bureau. The Bureau Chief provides CCDF updates at each staff meeting, and welcomes questions and feedback regarding Montana's state plan.

☒ State/Territory/local agencies with Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships grants.

Describe:

The MTHSA representative to the Council reports back to the EHS/CC grantees following the Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state

plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

Representatives from Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships grants were present at the EHS/CC Partnership State Stakeholders meetings on 9/22/2015 and 2/2/2016 where the Bureau Chief presented on the State Plan. Opportunities for feedback and discussion following the presentations were given.

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Describe:

Representatives from the Child and Adult Food Care Program and Child and Adult Food Program Sponsors attend the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program is part of the Early Childhood Services Bureau. The Bureau Chief provides CCDF updates at each staff meeting, and welcomes questions and feedback regarding Montana's state plan.

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for WIC, nutrition (including breast-feeding support), and childhood obesity prevention

Describe:

Representatives from the Family and Community Health Bureau attend the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and

recommendations from Council members.

- ☒ Other Federal, State, local and/or private agencies providing early childhood and school-age/youth serving developmental services.

Describe:

A representative from the Developmental Services Division attends the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

Representation from Part B IDEA, and the McKinney-Vento State Coordinator with the Office of Public Instruction participated in work groups focused on developing policies and procedures for special needs, expulsion/suspension, and homeless children and families.

- ☒ State/Territory agency responsible for implementing the Maternal and Child Home Visitation programs grant

Describe:

A representative from the Family and Community Health Bureau attends the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

- ☐ Agency responsible for Medicaid/Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT).

Describe:

☒ McKinney-Vento State coordinators for Homeless Education.

Describe:

A representative from OPI who is the McKinney-Vento State Coordinator attends the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

The McKinney-Vento State Coordinator with the Office of Public Instruction participated in a work group focused on developing policies and procedures for homeless children and families. The State Coordinator provided input on how to identify homeless children and families using the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness. Examples of how to develop policies and procedures to meet the needs of homeless families and children were provided by the State Coordinator. Continued discussion around homelessness is a result of the collaborative efforts of this work group.

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for public health.

Describe:

Representatives from the Family and Community Health Bureau, the Children's Mental Health Bureau, and the Statewide Health Consultant Coordinator attend the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for mental health.

Describe:

Representatives from the Family and Community Health Bureau, the Children's Mental

Health Bureau, and the Statewide Health Consultant Coordinator attend the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

The Statewide Pyramid Model Coordinator participated in work groups focused on developing policies and procedures for special needs, expulsion/suspension, and homeless children and families.

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for child welfare.

Describe:

A representative from the Public Assistance Bureau attends the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

☒ State/Territory liaison for military child care programs.

Describe:

A representative from Fort Harrison attends the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meeting. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council

members.

- ☒ State/Territory agency responsible for employment services/workforce development.

Describe:

A representative from the Public Assistance Bureau attends the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meeting. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

- ☒ State/Territory agency responsible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Describe:

A representative from the Public Assistance Bureau attends the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meeting. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

The TANF Program Manager participated in work groups focused on developing policies and procedures for special needs, expulsion/suspension, and homeless children and families.

- ☒ State/community agencies serving refugee or immigrant families.

Describe:

The state agency responsible for refugee and immigrant families is housed within the Human and Community Services Division. The Division Administrator is a member of the Best Beginnings Advisory Council attends the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a

CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

☒ Child care resource and referral agencies.

Describe:

A representative from the Child Care Resource and Referral Network attends the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

Members from Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies participated in work groups focused on developing policies and procedures for special needs, expulsion/suspension, and homeless children and families.

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies hosted Community Forums in November and December of 2015. A Frequently Asked Questions document (<http://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/hcsd/documents/ChildCare/CCDFFAQ.pdf>) was posted in response to the questions heard at the community forums.

☒ Provider groups or associations.

Describe:

Representatives from a Child Care Center, Child Care Group Home, Child Care Family Home, and the Montana Association for the Education of Young Children attend the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State

Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

Providers from Child Care Centers, Group Homes, and Family Child Care programs participated in work groups focused on developing policies and procedures for special needs, expulsion/suspension, and homeless children and families.

Child care providers attended Community Forums in November and December of 2015. A Frequently Asked Questions document (<http://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/hcsd/documents/ChildCare/CCDFFAQ.pdf>) was posted in response to the questions heard at the community forums.

☒ Worker organizations.

Describe:

A representative from MEA-MFT an organized labor/union organization attends the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

☒ Parent groups or organizations.

Describe:

A Family Support Agency representative attends the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. We are currently actively recruiting for parent participation on the council there is parent participation within our community coalitions across the state. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the

presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

☒ Other.

Describe:

Community Coalition Representatives from across the state, Early Childhood Private Philanthropy and Policy agencies, a pediatrician, the Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, and the Montana State Library are all represented on the council and attend the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meetings. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. Council members were able to ask questions about the upcoming changes, and were notified of the state's progress on completing the State Plan through email, website updates, and meeting discussions. Opportunities for feedback on the state plan, and discussion following the presentations were given. Work groups were formed around various policy changes in order to receive feedback and recommendations from Council members.

The Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence participated in work groups focused on developing policies and procedures for special needs, expulsion/suspension, and homeless children and families.

1.3.2. Describe the Statewide/Territory-wide public hearing process held to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services under this Plan (658D(b)(1)(C)).

Lead Agencies are required to hold at least one public hearing in the State/Territory with sufficient State/Territory-wide distribution of notice prior to such hearing to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services under the CCDF Plan. At a minimum, the description should include:

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) Date(s) of notice of public hearing: 01/04/2016

Reminder - Must be at least 20 calendar days prior to the date of the public hearing.

b) How was the public notified about the public hearing, including how notice was accessible for people with disabilities? Please include website links if utilized to provide notice.

Email, Early Childhood Services Bureau website (<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/CCDBGActof2014>), State public e-calendar (<https://app.mt.gov/cal/html/event?eventCollectionCode=dphhs>)

c) Date(s) of public hearing(s): 02/12/2016

Reminder - Must be no earlier than September 1, 2015 which is 9 months prior to the June 1, 2016 effective date of the Plan.

d) Hearing site(s) or method(s), including how geographic regions of the State/Territory were addressed DPHHS Sanders Auditorium, Helena, MT

e) Describe how the content of the Plan was made available to the public in advance of the public hearing(s) The plan was available on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website (<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/CCDBGActof2014>) and attached to the State public e-calendar (<https://app.mt.gov/cal/html/event?eventCollectionCode=dphhs>)

f) How will the information provided by the public be taken into consideration in the provision of child care services under this Plan? The Early Childhood Services Bureau developed a committee including the Bureau Chief and program managers to review all comments submitted during the comment period of February 5th through February 19. The committee will respond to comments and decide if any changes need to be made to the plan based on the comments. A page will be available on the Early Childhood Services Bureau Website that shows each comment and the response given by the committee.

1.3.3 Describe the strategies used by the Lead Agency to make the CCDF Plan and Plan Amendments available to the public. Check all that apply and describe the strategies below, including any relevant links as examples.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Working with advisory committees.

Describe:

The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a 60 member council. There is a CCDF report given by the Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief at each council meeting. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is notified via email, and a notice is posted on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website. Once an amendment to the State Plan has been made and accepted, the State Plan is updated on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council disseminates the information to their partners they work with, including

local and statewide partners.

☒ Working with child care resource and referral agencies.

Describe:

Child Care Resource and Referral agencies are notified via email, and a notice is posted on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website. Once an amendment to the State Plan has been made and accepted, the State Plan is updated on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website. Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies route any questions from their community members to the Early Childhood Services Bureau.

☐ Providing translation in other languages.

Describe:

☒ Making available on the Lead Agency website.

List the website:

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx>

☒ Sharing through social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, email, etc.).

Describe:

Montana uses an Interested Parties email distribution list to provide updates to Montana's State Plan, including the drafting process, important dates, and amendments. There are over 350 individuals on the Interested Parties list. In addition to the Interested Parties

List, Montana emails our various partners, including:

- The Early Childhood Project
- Child Care Licensing
- The Best Beginnings Advisory Council
- Best Beginnings Local Coalitions
- The Human and Community Services Division of Montana DPHHS
- Early Head Start and Head Start directors
- The Montana Project LAUNCH Initiative team
- Infant Toddler and Preschool Instructors
- Child Care Resource and Referral agencies

Once an amendment to the State Plan has been made and accepted, the State Plan is updated on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website. The public is notified via email,

☒ a notice is posted on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website.

Providing notification to stakeholders (e.g., provider groups, parent groups).

Describe:

Montana uses an Interested Parties email distribution list to provide updates to Montana's State Plan, including the drafting process, important dates, and amendments. There are over

350 individuals on the Interested Parties list, including child care providers and parents. In addition to the Interested Parties List, Montana emails our various partners, including:

- The Early Childhood Project
- Child Care Licensing
- The Best Beginnings Advisory Council
- Best Beginnings Local Coalitions
- The Human and Community Services Division of Montana DPHHS
- Early Head Start and Head Start directors
- The Montana Project LAUNCH Initiative team
- Infant Toddler and Preschool Instructors
- Child Care Resource and Referral agencies

These partners share the information provided with the providers and families in their communities. Once an amendment to the State Plan has been made and accepted, the State Plan is updated on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website. The public is notified ☐ email, and a notice is posted on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website.

Other.

Describe:

1.4 Coordination with Partners to Expand Accessibility and Continuity of Care

The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a requirement that the Plan describe how the State/Territory will efficiently, and to the extent practicable, coordinate child care services supported by CCDF with programs operating at the Federal, State/Territory, and local levels for children in the programs listed below.

1.4.1 Check who and describe how your State/Territory coordinates or plans to efficiently coordinate child care services with the following programs to expand accessibility and continuity of care, and assist children enrolled in early childhood programs to receive full-day services that meet the needs of working families. (658E(c)(2)(O))

Please describe the goals of this coordination, such as extending the day or year of services for families; smoothing transitions for children between programs or as they age into school, enhancing and aligning quality of services, linking comprehensive services to children in child care settings or developing supply of quality care for vulnerable populations. NOTE that this list

appears similar to the list provided in 1.3.1 which focused on consultation for purposes of developing the CCDF Plan, however, this list includes entities required by law, along with a list of optional CCDF Plan coordination partners that Lead Agencies potentially would coordinate with over the next 3 years to expand accessibility and continuity of care, and assist children enrolled in early childhood programs to receive full-day services. Check and describe all that apply.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- ☒ [REQUIRED] Programs operating at the Federal, State and local levels for children in pre-school programs (e.g., state-or locally-funded pre-k, Head Start, school-based programs, public and private preschools, programs serving preschool children receiving special education services, etc.).

Describe:

Coordination: The Lead Agency coordinates multiple grants and programs that enhance and align the quality of services in Montana. The Montana Preschool Development Grant (MPDG) is laying the foundation for state-funded preschool in Montana. MPDG and the STARS to Quality program work collaboratively to provide Environmental Rating Scale assessments to pre-k classrooms in Montana. Most of the MPDG classrooms are not participating in STARS to Quality at this time. However, the STARS to Quality assessors provide assessments to all appropriate classrooms within these two programs. This allows for coordination and alignment of interpretation of the scores and trainings to all providers involved. The STARS to Quality program works closely with Head Start, Early Head Start, private child care, programs serving preschool children receiving special education, MPDG, and Montana Project LAUNCH.

The Lead Agency will require licensed child care programs to create a policy that supports families in the event the program is not the best fit for either party. The program will be required to notify the parent of the policy in advance and help ease the transition to another program within a reasonable timeframe.

Project LAUNCH will support linking comprehensive services to children in child care settings thereby supporting quality care for vulnerable populations. Project LAUNCH also works very closely with the MPDG and STARS to Quality programs in Montana.

The Lead Agency will implement CCDF child care subsidy policies that will support families in continuity and quality of care. Some of these policies have already been implemented.

Families that qualify for a child care subsidy will receive eligibility for twelve months regardless of any income changes. Families will also be given a 90 day grace period for a job loss as well as a graduated phase out of the subsidy program when they no longer qualify.

The number of available absent days granted in one year for a family has been increased as

well.

Goals: The primary goal is to enhance and align the quality of services by expanding accessibility and continuity of care. The secondary goal is to promote the STARS to Quality program and increase participation. The outcome of aligning all efforts will provide a solid foundation of measurement across the state through or in partnership with STARS to Quality.

☒ [REQUIRED IF APPLICABLE] Tribal early childhood programs.

Describe, including which Tribes coordinating with:

Coordination: Each of Montana's Tribal CCDF Programs has a represented seat on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF. Additionally, individual tribal TANF programs work with local Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies to establish MOUs in delivery of services for dually eligible children. The Healthy MT Teen Parent grant contracts with nine community service organizations, two of which are tribal organizations. Forty Percent (40%) of the teen parent clients served by all of the sub-awardees are American Indian. In addition, the Head Start Collaboration grant is housed in the Early Childhood Services Bureau and collaborates with all other systems within the organization. There are seven Tribal Head Start and Early Head Start Programs. The Child and Adult Care Food Program, also housed in the Early Childhood Services Bureau, serves seven tribes. The system of collaboration within the Early Childhood Services Bureau allows for a great system of coordination as we deliver services and meet individual needs.

Goals: Increased coordination and understanding of different program administration strategies and policies. Stronger understanding of specific cultural needs and meeting the needs of families. Other outcomes may include MOUs between tribal government and state government related to licensing standards, expanded participation in the State's quality initiatives.

☐ Check N/A if no Indian Tribes and/or Tribal organizations or programs in the State.


☒ [REQUIRED] Other Federal, State, local early childhood programs serving infants and toddlers with disabilities.

Describe:

Coordination: Representatives from the Developmental Services Division are on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council as well as the Part C Coordinator. The Council will provide

advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

Goals: Increased understanding of services and agencies which may lead to stronger connections in supporting families with children who may have a disability.

 [REQUIRED] Early childhood programs serving homeless children (as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act).

Describe:

Coordination: The Montana Best Beginnings Advisory Council has developed a work group around homelessness in Montana. Serving on that work group are providers, parents, Resource and Referral agency staff members, the state homelessness coordinator for the Office of Public Instruction, members from the Montana's Public Health Department, and other interested individuals. All members were asked to provide input into policy and procedure for meeting the needs of homeless children as well as feedback to drafts of those documents as the Early Childhood Services Bureau continues to develop and fine tune its approach to coordination of services. The Early Childhood Services Bureau will revise its Child Care Policy Manual and Administrative Rules of Montana to add a policy for homeless children and families to receive a grace period to comply with eligibility requirements within the child care subsidy. We will research Montana State Statute on immunization requirements for children in child care and conditional enrollment form, research any health and safety requirements that may hinder a homeless child or child who is in foster care from enrolling in a child care facility, develop a plan to allow a grace period to comply with immunization and health and safety requirements for homeless children and children who are in foster care, and develop a plan to conduct outreach to homeless families to improve access to child care services. We also plan to create a communication plan that includes correspondence to families and child care providers on the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship, training for CCR&R staff on how to process eligibility determination for homeless families, and update the Lead Agency's website with information on services available for homeless children and families.

Goals: Increase access to child care services for families who may be homeless by reducing barriers regarding policies and statute. Policy development will support child care providers as well by increasing the resources and knowledge available on enrolling a child whose family is experiencing homelessness.

☒ [REQUIRED] Early childhood programs serving children in foster care.

Describe:

Coordination: Children in foster care may receive the child care scholarship through a referral from Child Protective Services [CPS]. Currently, CCUBS does not interface with the database for CPS. Their Social Workers must complete a hard copy of the referral form and fax, mail, or email the referral form to the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency. Child Care Resource and Referral [CCR&R] agencies directly work with local CPS workers and foster parents and children to meet the child's needs including providing information on quality and quantity of child care providers in the community. CCR&R agencies provide outreach to child care providers through recruitment and provider training. CCR&R agencies fill a role of assisting the family, child, and CPS worker with finding an appropriate child care provider to meet the needs of the child.

Child and Family Services provides representation on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council as well.

Goals: The Early Childhood Services Bureau will work with Montana Child and Family Services to continue to meet the needs of early childhood programs serving children in foster care.

Increased awareness of program and family needs. Increased understanding of eligibility policies.

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for child care licensing.

Describe:

Coordination: The Quality Assurance Division houses the Child Care Licensing Unit which is the entity that is responsible for child care licensing. The Early Childhood Services Bureau collaborates with Child Care Licensing to support child care licensing requirements. Child Care Licensing also provides representation on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council as well.

Goals: The goal of partnership and alignment between ECSB and Child Care Licensing is to ensure licensing standards and interpretation of rule meet the needs of child care providers as well as the STARS to Quality program. STARS to Quality works very closely with Child Care Licensing to ensure training requirements and criteria are complimentary and not duplicated potentially streamlining the process for licensing and STARS.

☒ State/Territory agency with Head Start State collaboration grant.

Describe:

Coordination: The Head Start State Collaboration Office is housed in the Early Childhood Services Bureau in addition to having a seat on the statewide Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

Goals: Increased awareness of program and family needs. Increased understanding of eligibility policies.

☒ State Advisory Council authorized by the Head Start Act.

Describe:

Coordination: The Best Beginnings Advisory Council serves as the state's comprehensive early childhood advisory council and will serve as the collaborating entity for the early childhood system. The council includes representation from interested constituency groups, governmental agencies, the public at large, child care providers, state and local government, and tribal communities.

The council's work will focus on creating a statewide plan for a comprehensive early childhood service system that will assist in the four principal objectives:

1. Children will have access to high quality early childhood programs.
2. Families with young children will have community support.
3. Children will have access to a medical home and health insurance.
4. Improving the social, emotional, and mental health needs of young children and families.

Goals: Increased awareness of program and family needs. Increased understanding of eligibility policies.

☒

State/Territory/local agencies with Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships grants.

Describe:

Coordination: The Head Start Collaboration Director for Montana is responsible for convening the Early Head Start Partnership grantees to support alignment within the state early childhood system. This group includes representation from STARS to Quality, Early Childhood Services Bureau, the Early Childhood Project, private child care providers involved in the partnership, Child Care Licensing, Early Head Start Training and Technical Assistance personnel, and the Early Childhood Collaborative Systems Unit Coordinator.

Goals: Increased awareness of program and family needs. Increased understanding of eligibility policies.

- ☒ McKinney-Vento State coordinators for Homeless Education or local educational agency
McKinney-Vento liaisons

Describe:

Coordination: The State Coordinator for Homeless Education is housed in the Montana Office of Public Instruction. This person is involved with the BBAC and therefore closely collaborates with the Lead Agency regarding this topic.

Goals: Increased access to child care services for families who may be homeless by reducing barriers regarding policies and statute. Policy development will support child care providers as well by increasing the resources and knowledge available on enrolling a child whose family is experiencing homelessness.

- ☒ Child care resource and referral agencies.

Describe:

Coordination: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies are represented on the council. In addition, at least quarterly meetings are held with the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies in order to brainstorm, address challenges and opportunities for service delivery. CCR&R Agencies will also be required partners for the community councils attached to the statewide council.

Goals: Increased coordination and consistent application of policies. Family friendly policies, opportunity to identify strengths and challenges within policy application and community level services.

- ☒ State/Territory agency responsible for public education.

Describe:

Coordination: The Office of Public Instruction has appointed an Early Grades Specialist, a Title 1- Neglected and Delinquent, Homeless Children and Youth Specialist, and a Preschool Specialist for Special Education (3-5) for representation on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council.

The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

Goals: Increased coordination related to resources and professional development. Stronger alignment between early childhood standards and kindergarten standards. Coordination of curriculum and standards from birth to age 8.

☒ State/Territory institutions for higher education, including community colleges.

Describe:

Coordination: Representatives of higher education including community colleges participate in the BBAC. Also, three community colleges/colleges receive a small amount of funding to increase enrollment in their Early Childhood Education programs as well support the Early Childhood curriculum delivered.

Goals: Increased enrollment in Early Childhood Education courses leading to completion of a degree in ECE. Students receiving a degree in ECE increase the qualified candidate pool thereby increasing quality in child care and early childhood education in Montana.

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Describe:

Coordination: Both the state CACFP office and CACFP sponsors of child care facilities have a seat on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF. CACFP is part of the Early Childhood Services Bureau, and they directly coordinate through meetings and projects to ensure the effective delivery of services throughout the state.

Goals: Awareness and outreach of services for child care providers.

To review and initiate nutrition and physical activity indicators within the QRIS framework, which will involve a great deal of collaboration between Child Care Licensing , Early Childhood Services Bureau (including STARS), and CACFP, who already are meeting on a monthly basis to collaborate and inform one-another about program-specific needs and issues.

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for WIC, nutrition (including breast-feeding support), and childhood obesity prevention.

Describe:

Coordination: The STARS to Quality program plans to connect with WIC in Montana to provide information specific to quality child care. Also, there is a strong connection between Healthy Montana Families home visiting and WIC. The majority of referrals for home visiting come from local WIC agencies in Montana. STARS to Quality would like to deepen the connection and education opportunities for parents with young children to quality indicators of child care. Because of the strong connection between HMF and WIC that already exists, connecting families to education regarding STARS to quality would be a natural fit.

Goals: To increase the knowledge of parents with young children regarding the importance of and access to quality child care programs; specifically provide direct connections and information regarding STARS to Quality during WIC appointments as well as home visits through HMF.

- ☒ Other Federal, State, local and/or private agencies providing early childhood and school-age/youth serving developmental services.

Describe:

Coordination: The State Agency will also work with a variety of federal partners and state partners to deliver high quality early childhood programs. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

Goals: Increased coordination and understanding across sectors about services for the early childhood population and their families.

- ☒ State/Territory agency responsible for implementing the Maternal and Childhood Home Visitation programs grant.

Describe:

Coordination: The Family and Community Health Bureau, responsible for home visiting, will have a seat on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

Goals: Increased coordination and understanding of services for families. Home visiting will become a strong focus of BBAC and STARS to Quality as we continue to build our coordinated system. The Montana Pyramid Model, a social and emotional program designed to support young children and families will be delivered in part through Family and Community Health Bureau home visiting models.

- ☒ Agency responsible for Medicaid/Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT).

Describe:

Coordination: The Public Health and Safety Division (PHSD) of Montana DPHHS oversees the Medicaid program which includes Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) for children. The EPSDT program is the children's health care benefit in Montana. It allows children to be screened during a well-child check-up in order to diagnose and treat early if and when appropriate. Many families accessing the Best Beginnings Scholarship program in order to attend child care are utilizing Medicaid and therefore should

be receiving EPSDT. The Lead Agency collaborates with the Family and Community Health Bureau of the PHSD which houses the Healthy Montana Families home visiting programs. HMF requires child clients to receive well child checkups as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics Bright Futures well child schedule thereby receiving EPSDT through Medicaid. Children who receive services through Healthy Montana Families and then access the Best Beginnings Scholarship to receive child care services have likely received EPSDT on the recommended schedule and also should have received proper immunizations on scheduled as well. This supports child care by familiarizing the family with the regular exposure to immunizations as well as the process and schedule for administering them making their children more likely to arrive in child care with current immunizations and documentation.

Goals: Support collaboration between Healthy Montana Families home visiting services and child care services in Montana. Create a warm-hand off and strong relationship between the home visitor, child care provider, family, and child to support health and well-being in children.

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for public health.

Describe:

Coordination: Representatives from the Family and Community Health Bureau and the Children's Mental Health Bureau are included in the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. In addition, joint projects occur among these partners such as partnering with the Public Health office on Immunization training and outreach. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

Goals: Additional Child Care Health Consultants in the State to respond to need and to STARS quality indicators. A framework of Consultants and Advisors to be developed. Ongoing policy development for families with special needs children.

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for mental health.

Describe:

Coordination: Representatives from the Family and Community Health Bureau, the Children's Mental Health Bureau, and the Statewide Health Consultant Coordinator will have a seat on the Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

Goals: Improving the social, emotional, and mental health needs of young children and families.

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for child welfare.

Describe:

Coordination: The Children's Trust Fund and Child and Family Services Division will have a seat on the Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF. Additionally, the state child care agency administers the child care program for children in foster care based on referrals from community social workers, determining need for care. The Early Childhood Services Bureau chief is appointed to the Children's Trust Fund and coordinates with both agencies to work within a comprehensive system.

Goals: Increased coordination and shared understanding of policies and programs.

Blended and leveraged funding is possible through combined conferences and programs.

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Children directs the Period of Purple Crying for the Children's Trust Fund Board. These organizations, along with the Child Protective Services Administrator, represent child welfare and sit on the BBAC board to coordinate services.

☒ State/Territory liaison for military child care programs.

Describe:

Coordination: A child care representative from Fort Harrison will have a seat on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including CCDF.

Goals: Increased coordination and shared understanding of policies and programs.

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for employment services/workforce development.

Describe:

Coordination: The contracted agencies through the Public Assistance Bureau, entitled WoRC operators, will have a represented seat on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF. WoRC operators also provide referrals for TANF families who need child care.

Goals: Increased awareness of policies and strengthening family friendly approaches by ensuring shared understanding of eligibility policies and requirements. Collaboration with our

Apprenticeship Program for workforce development. Data sharing with employment statistics and compensation goals as outcomes.

☒ State/Territory agency responsible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Describe:

Coordination: A representative from TANF will have a seat on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

The TANF office and the Child Care Resource and Referral agency offices work closely to ensure that program policies and services are applied consistently. The Eligibility Specialists at the local CCR&Rs work with the WoRC Program case managers to establish need for service and set up benefits for individuals who are eligible. The TANF Working Caretaker Relative program and the program requirements are outlined in the TANF policy manual.

Goals: Increased coordination and shared understanding of policies and programs.

☐ State/Territory community agencies serving refugee or immigrant families

Describe:

☒ Provider groups or associations.

Describe:

Coordination: MtAEYC, Montana Child Care Association, and labor organizations will have representation on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

Goals: Increased awareness and shared understanding of the needs of early childhood programs across setting types.

☐ Worker organizations.

Describe:

☒ Parent groups or organizations.

Describe:

Coordination: Parents have representation on the statewide Best Beginnings Advisory Council and the local community councils. The Council advises the Early Childhood Services Bureau on comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

Goals: Parent Participation increases the Early Childhood Services Bureau's understanding about the barriers the families experience and offers insight into what family friendly policies are needed to meet family needs.

☒ Other.

Describe:

Coordination: Philanthropic organizations, Department of Labor and Industry and business will also have representation on the Council. The Early Childhood Services Bureau contracts with Child Care Training to deliver long distance/online training. Other contracting and coordinating work includes Child Care +, U of M - Missoula for child care inclusion classes and training, child care health consultants, and coordination with workgroups responsible for ELG, Assessment and Curriculum, and the Montana Pyramid Model. Twenty Community Coalitions are established to carry out the work of BBAC in coordination and delivery of services to families and children. These Coalitions are a result of the collaboration of Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) and the BBAC.

Goals: The potential for diversified funding sources and community level support are expanded through the participation of these groups. A partnership with these organizations increases family friendly practices with businesses through awareness.

1.5 Optional Use of Combined Funds

The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a provision that States and Territories have the option to combine funding for CCDF child care services with funding for any of the required programs listed in 1.4.1. These include programs operating at the Federal, State and local levels for children in preschool programs, tribal early childhood programs, and other early childhood programs, including those serving infants and toddlers with disabilities, homeless children, and children in foster care. (658E(c)(2)(O))(ii)) Combining funds could include blending multiple funding streams, pooling funds, or layering funds together from multiple funding streams in an effort to expand and/or enhance services for children and families to allow for delivery of comprehensive high quality care that meets the needs of children and families. For example, State/Territory agencies may use multiple funding sources to offer grants or contracts to programs to deliver services; a State/Territory may allow county/local government to use coordinated funding streams; or policies may be in place that allow local programs to layer CCDF funds with additional funding sources to pay for full-day, full-year child care that meets Early Head Start/Head Start or State/Territory pre-kindergarten requirements in addition to State/Territory child care licensing requirements. As a reminder, per the OMB Compliance

Supplement governing audits

(https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a133_compliance_supplement_2014), CCDF funds may be used in collaborative efforts with Head Start (CFDA 93.600) programs to provide comprehensive child care and development services for children who are eligible for both programs. In fact, the coordination and collaboration between Head Start and the CCDF is mandated by sections 640(g)(2)(D) and (E), and 642(c) of the Head Start Act (42 USC 9835(g)(2)(D) and (E); 42 USC 9837(c)) in the provision of full working day, full calendar year comprehensive services (42 USC 9835(a)(5)(v)). In order to implement such collaborative programs, which share, for example, space, equipment or materials, grantees may blend several funding streams so that seamless services are provided.

1.5.1 Will you combine CCDF funds with the funds for any program with which you coordinate (described in 1.4.1)?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Yes, If yes, describe at a minimum:

How do you define "combine"

Using multiple funding streams to pay for services; by paying a portion out of each funding stream and/or paying for some services with one funding stream and other services with a different funding stream.

Which funds will you combine

CACFP, Head Start, ECCS, Preschool Development, Healthy Montana Teens, LAUNCH, MIECHV, and Montana State general funds.

Goal(s) of combining funds (why?) and expected outcomes, such as extending the day or year of services available (i.e., full-day, full-year programming for working families), smoothing transitions for children, enhancing and aligning quality of services, linking comprehensive services to children in child care or developing the supply of child care for vulnerable populations

- CACFP: To provide nutritious foods that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of children
- STARS: To enhance the value of child care through a continuous quality improvement program for early childhood education; Montana State general funds
- Healthy Montana Teens, LAUNCH, Preschool Development, Head Start, Montana State funds (STARS): To support early childhood workforce / professional development, inclusion of children with disabilities, and a statewide network of Child Care Resource and Referral agencies

- BBAC: which consists of ECCS, Preschool Development, Healthy Montana Teens, MIECHV: To fund Montana's collaborative entity for assisting in children having access to high quality early childhood programs, families with young children having community support, children having access to a medical home and health insurance, and improving the social, emotional, and mental health needs of young children and families

Method of fund allocation (how you will be combining multiple sets of funding, such as at the State/Territory level, local level, program level?)

As described in the response to the question "How do you define "combine:"

- In some instances - funding streams will be combined through accounting controls, and payments will be split out among each applicable fund.
- In other instances - separate funding streams will each pay directly for a service.

How are the funds tracked and method of oversight

The funds are tracked through the State of Montana's accounting system: SABHRS (Statewide Accounting and Budgeting / Human Resources System). The Budget Analyst for the Early Childhood Services Bureau, within the Human and Community Services Division of the State of Montana Department Public Health and Human Services is responsible for tracking, reconciling, reporting, and maintaining all accounting records associated with these funding streams. Periodic audit reviews are conducted to ensure ☐ compliance and accuracy.

No.

1.6 Public-Private Partnerships

The CCDBG Act of 2014 adds a new provision that requires States and Territories to describe in the Plan how the State/Territory encourages partnerships among State/Territory and public agencies, tribal organizations, private entities, faith based organizations and/or community-based organizations to leverage existing service delivery systems for child care and development services and to increase the supply and quality of child care services for children through age 12, such as by implementing voluntary shared services alliance models (i.e., cooperative agreement among providers to pool resources to pay for shared fixed costs and operation). (658E(c)(2)(P)) ACF expects these types of partnerships to leverage public and private resources to further the goals of reauthorization.

1.6.1 Describe the entities with whom and the levels at which the State/Territory is partnering (level - State/Territory, county/local, and/or programs), the goals of the partnerships, method of partnering. Include in your description examples of activities that have resulted from partnerships with other State/Territory and public agencies, tribal organizations, private entities, faith based organizations or community-based organizations, and how the partnerships are expected to leverage existing service delivery systems for child care and development services and to increase the supply and quality of child care services.

Through the Best Beginnings Advisory Council, representatives of local government will be required to participate on the attached community councils including public health, local education agencies, and county commissioners. Additionally, the statewide health consultant/coordinator to the CCDF Quality Initiatives, is located under a local public health agency and serves on the statewide council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

The Office of Public Instruction has appointed multiple staff as representatives on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council, including a cabinet level OPI representative, the OPI Montana Preschool Development Grant Coordinator, the Homeless and Title One coordinator, the Preschool Specialist for Special Education ages 3-5 and an Early Grades Specialist. They bring expertise in early literacy, homelessness, Title 1, Part C and preschool programming through the Preschool Development Grant.

The State Agency will also work with a variety of federal partners and state partners to deliver high quality early childhood programs. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

Representatives from the Family and Community Health Bureau and the Children's Mental Health Bureau are included in the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. In addition, joint projects occur among these partners such as partnering with the Public Health office on Immunization training and outreach. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

The contracted agencies through the Public Assistance Bureau, WoRC operators, will have a represented seat on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF. WoRC operators also provide referrals for TANF families who need child care.

Each of Montana's Tribal CCDF Programs has a represented seat on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF. Additionally, individual tribal TANF programs work with local Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies to establish MOUs in delivery of services for dually eligible children.

The Healthy MT Teen Parent grant contracts with nine community service organizations, two of which are tribal organizations. Forty Percent (40%) of the teen parent clients served by all of the sub awardees are American Indian. In addition, the Head Start Collaboration grant is housed in

the Early Childhood Services Bureau and collaborates with all other systems within the organization. There are seven Tribal Head Start and Early Head Start Programs in 35 sites. The Child and Adult Care Food Program, also housed in the Early Childhood Services Bureau, serves seven tribes. The system of collaboration within the Early Childhood Services Bureau allows for a great system of coordination as we deliver services and meet individual needs. Both the state CACFP office and CACFP sponsors of child care facilities have a seat on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF. CACFP is part of the Early Childhood Services Bureau, and they directly coordinate through meetings and projects to ensure the effective delivery of services throughout the state.

A representative from the DPHHS Disability services Division will sit on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council as well as the Part C Coordinator. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

The Family and Community Health Bureau, responsible for home visiting, will have a seat on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF. The Children's Trust Fund and Child and Family Services Division will have a seat on the Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

Additionally, the state child care agency administers the child care program for children in foster care based on referrals from community social workers, determining need for care.

The Early Childhood Services Bureau chief is appointed to the Children's Trust Fund and coordinates with both agencies to work within a comprehensive system.

A child care representative from Military services has a seat on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including CCDF.

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies are represented on the council. In addition, at least quarterly meetings are held with the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies in order to brainstorm, address challenges and opportunities for service delivery. CCR&R Agencies will also be required partners for the community councils attached to the statewide council.

MtAEYC, Montana Child Care Association, and labor organizations will have representation on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council will provide advisory capacity for comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF. Parents have representation on the statewide Best Beginnings Advisory Council and the local community councils. The Council advises the Early Childhood Services Bureau on comprehensive early childhood services in Montana, including the CCDF.

Philanthropic organizations, Department of Labor and Industry and business also have representation on the Council. The Early Childhood Services Bureau contracts with Child Care Training to deliver long distance/online training. Other contracting and coordinating work includes Child Care +, U of M - Missoula for child care inclusion classes and training, and coordination with workgroups responsible for ELG, Assessment and Curriculum, and the Montana Pyramid Model. Twenty Community Coalitions are established to carry out the work of BBAC in coordination and delivery of services to families and children. These Coalitions are a

result of the collaboration of Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) and the BBAC.

A Representative of the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, a philanthropic organization, is on the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The CCDF administrator and multiple grant leads within the Early Childhood Services Bureau have worked collaboratively with the Funders for Montana's Children, a private philanthropic group that is providing funding Early Childhood Service support in Montana. Individual meetings about collaboration have been held with the CCDF administrator and the Early Childhood Services Bureau staff have participated as panelists at a statewide forum sponsored by the funders group.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

1.7 Coordination with Local or Regional Child Care Resource and Referral Systems

States may use funds to support or establish Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R systems (also see section 7.4). If they do, there are specific requirements for CCR&Rs (658E(c)(3)(B)(iii)) These include:

- Provide families with information on a full range of child care options (including faith-based, community-based child care centers and family child care homes, nontraditional hours and emergency child care centers) in their local area or region
- To the extent practicable, work directly with families who receive child care assistance to offer the families support and assistance in making an informed decision about child care options in an effort to ensure families are enrolling their children in the most appropriate child care setting to suit their needs and that is of high quality as determined by the State/Territory
- Collect data and provide information on the coordination of services and supports, including services provided through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for children with disabilities
- Collect data and provide information on the supply of and demand for child care services in local areas or regions of the State/Territory and submit such information to the State/Territory
- Work to establish partnerships with public agencies and private entities, including faith-based and community-based child care centers and family child care homes providers, to increase the supply and quality of child care services in the State/Territory
- As appropriate, coordinate their activities with the activities of the Lead Agency and/or local agencies that administer CCDF.

Nothing in statute prohibits States from using CCR&R agencies to conduct or provide additional services beyond those required by statute above.

1.7.1 Does the State fund a system of local or regional CCR&R organizations?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- ☒ Yes. The State/Territory funds a CCR&R system. See also related follow-up questions in Section 7.1 and 7.4.

If yes, the local or regional referral agency is required to do all of the activities listed here.

See also related follow-up questions in Section 7.1 and 7.4. Does the CCR&R system provide all services identified below:

Montana has a written contract with regional CCR&Rs. The following services are provided by the regional CCR&R agencies and contained in the written contracts.

Contractors are required to report monthly regarding data for the following:

1. Referral services for families seeking child care services in the CCR&R region include the following:
 - Parent referrals include information regarding provider facility types, hours of care including those that include nontraditional hours, and emergency child care providers;
 - Including customer service and consumer education on making an informed decision on the child care provider selected by the parent to meet the needs of the family.
2. Eligibility determination services for families needing assistance to pay for child care services;
3. Consumer Education information for families and providers in the following areas:
 - Information about quality, quantity of child care services, and provider training opportunities or participating in Montana's QRIS system;
 - Referrals include data on the supply and number of child care inquiries, the types of facility, and other personal preferences for child care providers; and
 - Working with the state Best Beginnings Advisory Council, Best Beginnings local coalitions, non-profits, and child care providers located in the CCR&R's regions to increase supply of providers available for families.
4. Community services available to assist families and providers regarding special needs including community availability of IDEA services, homelessness, immunizations, etc.;
5. Coaching for providers involved in Montana's QRIS system; and
6. Emergency preparedness information for families and providers using childcare services in Montana

Montana will include tracking specific data around faith-based and community based facilities within their regions on revised monthly reporting forms.

- ☐ No. The State/Territory does not fund a CCR&R system and has no plans to establish. Use section 7.4 to describe plans, if any, to establish a CCR&R system.

1.8 Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan

The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a requirement that States must include a Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan for coordination of activities with the State/Territory human services agency, emergency management agency, child care licensing agency, State/Territory local resource and referral agencies, and the State Advisory Council (SAC) or other state-designated cross-agency body if there is no SAC. (658E(c)(2)(U)) The Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan must include:

- Guidelines for continuing CCDF assistance and child care services after a disaster, which may include provision of temporary child care, and temporary operating standards for child care after a disaster.
- Requirements that child care providers receiving CCDF have in place procedures for evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, lock-down, communication and reunification with families, continuity of operations, accommodation of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions.
- Requirements that child care providers receiving CCDF have in place procedures for staff and volunteer emergency preparedness training and practice drills.

1.8.1 Describe the status of State's Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan.

Effective Date: 09/30/2017

- ☐ Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above by March 1, 2016. If applicable, describe additional ways the State/Territory addresses the needs of children receiving CCDF before, during and after a disaster or emergency, not already incorporated into the Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan. If available, please provide a link to the disaster plan

If applicable, describe additional ways the State/Territory addresses the needs of children receiving CCDF before, during and after a disaster or emergency, not already incorporated into the Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan. If available, please provide a link to the disaster plan

- ☒ Not implemented. The State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion

date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses here will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016) [09/30/2017](#)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other) [Partially implemented](#)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

[The child care licensing requirements require providers to conduct fire drills.](#)

[The Early Childhood Services Bureau requires CCR&Rs to submit annual Emergency Preparedness Plans that address coordination with child care providers and emergency personnel in case of identified disaster or emergency events.](#)

- Child Care Resource and Referral agencies are required to maintain, and train staff annually on their agency Emergency Preparedness Plan; which will contain a Continuity of Operations plan, and a Devolution Plan. The Emergency Preparedness plan, Continuity of Operations Plan, and the Devolution of Operations plans need to be reviewed by each agency's Emergency Work Group Committee on an annual basis.
- The plan must include a working strategy to create, run and staff an Emergency Child Care Center for rescue and relief workers and a "guardian" program to help staff the center in an emergency.
- For continuity planning, an updated roster for members on the guardian plan will be submitted with the revised plans on the first Friday in January. This information is essential in the event that duties need to be devolved to another agency
- If a significant natural event occurs in the local service area, which impacts families and/or providers, the following will occur:
 - The agency will check in with their child care providers in the affected areas to assure that they are Ok and if they are in need of any resources
 - If the Provider has to evacuate, the agency within that service area will assist in getting information to the families of the children in the programs and act as a communication resource for families and child care providers. Methodology for informing families should be included in the emergency preparedness plan
 - Report to the Early Childhood Services Bureau within 24 hours any information necessary related to the significant natural event. Information shall be emailed to the Early Childhood Services Bureau Child Care Program Manager

[The Early Childhood Services Bureau will continue to work closely with its state-wide PublicHealth and Safety Division which has oversight of the state's disaster relief](#)

services to identify areas hardest hit by disaster. Once identified, the following steps will occur:

1. Child Care Resource and Referral agencies will be contacted to ascertain which families are in need of child care assistance in temporary programs;
2. Coordination with Child Care Licensing will occur to ensure that temporary facilities meet operational standards;
3. Work with the identified facilities to ensure that they are set up to receive child care assistance payments in a timely manner;
4. Cooperation with families, shelters, and Child Care Resource and Referral agencies to ensure family child care needs continue to be met until they are able to return to their homes.

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented [Guidelines for continuing CCDF assistance and child care services after a disaster \(which may include provision of temporary child care, and temporary operating standards for child care after a disaster\)](#)

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

[The Child Care Licensing Program has drafted the requirements for emergency preparedness and response planning and is working with the agency's legal counsel to begin the rule proposal process. The Child Care Licensing Program will work with Office of Legal Affairs to file the emergency preparedness rule in January 2016. This process involves noticing the public of the proposed amendments, and official comment period, formal public hearing followed by the department's response to the public comment. Once all of this is complete, adoption of the rule can commence.](#)

Projected start date for each activity: [01/01/2016](#)

Projected end date for each activity: [09/30/2017](#)

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity [Early Childhood Services Bureau and Child Care Licensing](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

[Office of Legal Affairs and the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency Network](#)

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented [child care providers receiving CCDF have in place procedures for staff and volunteer emergency preparedness training and practice drills.](#)

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

[The Child Care Licensing Program has drafted the requirements for emergency preparedness and response planning and is working with the agency's legal counsel to begin the rule proposal process. Emergency preparedness requirements for Legally Certified Providers will need to be implemented as well. The Child Care Licensing Program will work with Office of Legal Affairs to file the emergency preparedness rule as soon as legally permissible. This rule will include guidance for how providers need to prepare for an emergency. This includes both fire and other types of emergencies. It will also outline the training requirements for provider and staff. The rule change process involves noticing the public of the proposed amendments, and official comment period, formal public hearing followed by the department's response to the public comment. Once all of this is complete, adoption of the rule can commence.](#)

Projected start date for each activity: [01/01/2016](#)

Projected end date for each activity: [09/30/2017](#)

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity
[Early Childhood Services Bureau and Child Care Licensing](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

[Office of Legal Affairs, Child Care Resource and Referral Agency Network](#)

[2 Promote Family Engagement through Outreach and Consumer Education](#)

Parents are their children's most important teacher and advocate. State and Territory child care

systems interact with parents in multiple ways, therefore presenting many opportunities to engage and inform families. Child care providers can serve as convenient and trusted sources of information for parents and family members on child development and community supports and services. State/Territory and local child care assistance systems should be designed to promote seamless linkages to useful information and other child- and family-services, such as during subsidy intake and redetermination processes and when parents utilize child care resource and referral or QRIS agencies. Outreach and consumer education is an ongoing process and is expected to cover the entire age span covered by CCDF from birth through age 12. The CCDBG Act of 2014 includes key purposes that address the role of parents as child care consumers who need information to make informed choices regarding the services that best suit their needs. A new purpose of CCDBG is to "promote involvement by parents and family members in the development of their children in child care settings." States and Territories have the opportunity to consider how information can be provided to parents through the child care assistance system, partner agencies, and child care sites that will support their role as their children's teacher and advocate. Key new provisions include:

1. 1. The plan must certify that States and Territories will collect and disseminate consumer and provider education information to CCDF parents, providers, and the general public, including information about:
 - a) the availability of child care assistance,
 - b) the quality of child care providers (if available),
 - c) Other programs (specifically Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Head Start and Early Head Start, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)) for which families may also qualify.
 - d) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) programs and services,
 - e) Research and best practices in child development, and
 - f) State/Territory policies regarding social- emotional/behavioral and early childhood mental health of young children, which may include positive behavioral intervention and support models, and policies on the expulsion of preschool-aged children (children from birth to five for purposes of this requirement) from early childhood programs receiving CCDF.
- 2. Information related to the health and safety of children in child care settings. The plan must certify that the State/Territory will make public certain information about the results of health and safety monitoring (described in section 5) using a website that is consumer-friendly and in an easily accessible format, including:
 - a) Provider-specific information: 1) results of monitoring and inspection reports, including those due to major substantiated complaints; 2) last date of inspection; and 3) information on corrective actions taken (if applicable).
 - b) Information about: 1) the annual number of deaths; 2) the annual number of serious injuries; and 3) annual number of incidences of substantiated child abuse in child care settings.
 - c) State/Territory processes for: 1) licensing child care providers; 2) conducting

background checks and the offenses that would keep a provider from being allowed to care for children; and 3) conducting monitoring and inspections of child care providers.

2.1 Information about Child Care Financial Assistance Program Availability and Application Process

Lead Agencies must inform parents of eligible children and the general public of the process by which they can apply for and potentially receive child care services. (658D(b)(1)(A)), 658E(c)(2)(E)(i)(1))

2.1.1 Describe how the State/Territory informs families of availability of services.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) How does the State/Territory identify populations and areas of potentially eligible families (e.g., using available federal, State/Territory and local needs assessments to identify potentially eligible families?)

Needs assessments have been completed in the following ways: Montana Preschool Development Grant for children ages 3-5, local community assessments completed by community coalitions under the Best Beginnings Advisory Council, needs assessments for the communities involved in the Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health [LAUNCH] Grant, assessments under the STARS to Quality Program, and needs assessment through the Head Start State Collaboration Office. Child Care Resource and Referral [CCR&R] agencies offer information on a local community's needs when they identify a need.

b) What partners help with outreach? For example, child care resource and referral agencies, home visitors, pediatricians, faith-based services, State/Territory or local agencies and organizations or other familiar and safe access points serving vulnerable or low-income populations.

Child Care Resource and Referral agencies in Montana provide referrals for child care to families. CCR&R's also provide subsidy eligibility information and support to families in the area which they serve. CCR&Rs are contracted to provide consumer education. A publication was developed through the Montana Child Care Resource & Referral Network to provide education and awareness in assisting families seeking child care which will be

updated in 2016. Additionally the Lead Agency has a user-friendly website, which includes QRIS ratings, and all CCR&Rs are required to have websites and promotional materials. The Child Care Licensing Unit of MT DPHHS also provides a public web portal on their website, in which parents can access public records related to child care providers. The lead agency works with the Best Beginnings Advisory Council because of the membership on the council to partner for outreach. The BBAC has representation from local community coalitions, other state agencies, home visiting, child care providers, the governor's office, and other federal grant recipients.

c) What outreach strategies does the Lead Agency use (e.g., media campaigns, State/Territory website, or other electronic outreach)?

The Lead Agency uses a website (<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx>), local CCR&R agencies, the Early Childhood Project (ECP), State Best Beginnings Advisory Council (BBAC), local community coalitions which are a part of BBAC, and child care programs as strategies for outreach to parents, families, and the general public. We are also developing a media campaign specific to the STARS to Quality (Montana's QRIS) program which will include information on child care in general with a focus on why quality is important. It will also include information specific to STARS to Quality and its benefits. Child Care Resource and Referral [CCR&R] agencies advertise at a local level using radio, billboards, newspapers, newsletters, Facebook, and other electronic communication to provide outreach. The lead agency's website has information on child care assistance and online application. Additionally, outreach strategies have included working with entities such as the Montana Preschool Development Grant, Early Head Start/Child Care Partnership recipients, LAUNCH Grant, and Head Start State Collaboration Council.

2.1.2 How can parents apply for services? Check all that apply.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Electronically via online application, mobile app or email.

Provide link <https://app.mt.gov/ccubs/>

☐ In-person interview or orientation.

Describe agencies where these may occur:

- ☐ Phone
- ☒ Mail
- ☐ At the child care site
- ☒ At a child care resource and referral agency.
- ☐ Through kiosks or online portals at related State/Territory/local agency or organization serving low-income populations.

Describe:

- ☐ Through a coordinated application process (e.g., application is linked to other benefits program to allow parents to apply for several programs at one time).

Describe:

- ☒ Other strategies.

Describe:

A parent can apply through fax or email to one of the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies located throughout the state.

2.2 Consumer Education Website

The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a purpose of the child care program "to promote involvement by parents and family members in the development of their children in child care settings." (658A(b)(3)) The consumer education requirements address multiple topics that parents and family members need in order to make informed choices and act as their most important teacher and advocate. Lead agencies must certify that they will collect and disseminate the following information through resource and referral agencies or other means. (658E(c)(2)(E))

2.2.1 The State/Territory certifies that it collects and disseminates the following information to parents, providers and the general public:

- information about the availability of the full diversity of child care services that will promote informed child care choices,
- Availability of child care assistance,
- Quality of child care providers (if available),
- Other programs (specifically Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Head Start and Early Head Start, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

program, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) for which families may also qualify.

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) programs and services,
- Research and best practices in child development, including social and emotional development, early childhood development, meaningful parent and family engagement, and physical health and development (particularly healthy eating and physical activity), and
- State/Territory policies regarding the social-emotional behavioral health of young children, which may include positive behavioral intervention and support models, and policies on expulsion of preschool-aged children, in early childhood programs receiving child care assistance (CCDF).

Effective Date: 09/30/2016

☒ Yes. The State/Territory certifies as of March 1, 2016 that it collects and disseminates the above information to parents, providers and the general public. Describe using 2.2.2 through 2.2.7 below.

☐ No. If no, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with to complete

implementation of this activity

2.2.2 Describe how the State/Territory makes information available about the full diversity of child care services that will promote informed child care choices, including consumer-friendly strategies such as materials that are culturally responsive and in multiple languages as needed that reflect the literacy levels of consumers, and are easy to access

Effective Date: 09/30/2016

- a) Describe how the State/Territory makes information about the full diversity of child care services available to 1) parents of eligible children, 2) providers and 3) the general public
1. The Early Childhood Services Bureau website offers a pathway to the availability of all child care providers through links to the Quality Assurance Division - Child Care Licensing and the Best Beginnings Scholarship Program. Under 'Links', information on other social services can be accessed. Information about programs participating in STARS to Quality is also included on the website:
<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx>
 2. Providers - Providers can access information via the Early Childhood Services Bureau website regarding the Best Beginnings Advisory Council, Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships, STARS to Quality, CACFP, Head Start Collaboration Office, Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program, Resource and Referral Agencies, and Workplace/Professional Development: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx>
 3. General Public - The general public can access all information via the Early Childhood Services Bureau website: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx>. The general public can receive assistance in accessing information through the Disability and Employment Transitions section within Montana DPHHS. Services include: Qualified Sign Language Interpreters, Montana Telecommunications Access Program (MTAP), and Blind and Low Vision Services by County.

- b) Describe what you provide and how (i.e., methods such as written materials, direct communication, etc.)

The Early Childhood Services Bureau provides information on the website about the full diversity of child care services in Montana, and provides a link to the Quality Assurance Division Child Care Licensing provider search portal. Child Care Resource and Referral agencies also provide information about the full diversity of child care services through their websites, welcome packets, and at their agencies. Families, providers, and the general public are able to make appointments or walk in to the Child Care Resource and Referral

agencies to learn more about the full diversity of child care services in Montana. Newsletters are distributed in the mail and are available online. They address the full diversity of services in their communities. Written materials are available through each of the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies; these materials provide information about community-based and culturally responsive options for child care.

STARS to Quality: Marketing materials have been developed and distributed to promote the full diversity of child care services that are offered through STARS to Quality programs. The STARS to Quality marketing plan has been implemented to improve these materials, and includes additional materials regarding the importance of choosing a quality child care provider.

c) Describe who you partner with to make information about the full diversity of child care choices available

The Early Childhood Services Bureau partners with the Child Care Licensing Bureau, Early Childhood Project, and all other contractors to promote the availability of a full diversity of child care services to promote informed child care choices.

2.2.3 Describe how the State/Territory makes information about the quality (such as through a quality rating and improvement system, if available, nationally-recognized accreditation, or other means) of child care services available to the public, including consumer-friendly strategies such as messages that are designed to engage intended audiences and are easy to understand

Effective Date: 09/30/2016

a) Describe how the State/Territory makes information about child care quality available to 1) parents of eligible children, 2) providers and 3) the general public

The Early Childhood Services Bureau website has links to extensive information about the STARS to Quality program. The information includes a list of participating programs and their STAR level, as well as the STARS Standards that outline all criteria that must be met and maintained at each level. STARS certificates are sent to programs when a STAR level is achieved in order to display in their program. Rack cards and posters are available through local CCR&R agencies to be used by STARS to Quality programs, as well as to be

disseminated to parents and other interested parties. Also, STARS to Quality has contracted with a marketing company in Montana to further develop promotional materials, public service announcements, and other items that educate and promote the importance of choosing quality child care. The goals of the STARS Outreach and Marketing Plan are:

1. Increase the amount of provider participants in the STARS to Quality program to a total of 300 by January 2017. 18% of licensed programs in Montana are participating in STARS to Quality, currently. This number will be monitored as we increase participation. Our goal is 26% participation by January 2017.
2. Educate child care providers about the benefits of participating in STARS.
3. Educate parents and families about the benefits of choosing a childcare program that is participating in STARS to Quality.
4. Support, celebrate, and encourage current providers in STARS for their dedication to quality early childhood education and learning programs.

Another means of accessing information regarding child care services is through the Montana Public Portal. This portal provides an option to search programs and view their licensing history, which includes any deficiencies that the program may have received as well as what type of visit was conducted. Included in this portal are the following links: Selecting quality care, Licensing regulations, License/Registration history, and Payment assistance options. To view this webpage, visit: <http://ccubs-sanswrite.hhs.mt.gov/MontanaPublic/ProviderSearch.aspx>

b) Describe what you provide and how (i.e., methods such as written materials, direct communication, etc.)

We provide information through written materials as well as on the ECSB website. Direct communication also occurs with partners and contractors such as BBAC, Head Start Collaboration, Early Childhood Project, BBAC, and CCR&R Agencies.

c) Describe who you partner with to make information about child care quality available

The Lead Agency partners with CCR&R agencies to promote child care quality. Many of these agencies provide information on their individual websites as well as offering information on the ECSB website. The Lead Agency also partners with the Montana Early Childhood Project (ECP). The ECP website also contains information regarding child care quality as it relates to professional development. Links on this website include: Montana Early Learning Standards, Montana Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program, 2013 Knowledge Base, MT Directorial Credential, Early Childhood Acronym List, and links to available trainings in Montana. Click here to access the website: <http://www.mtecp.org>.

2.2.4 Describe how the State/Territory shares information with eligible parents about other available human service programs.

For example, does the State/Territory share information about these other programs through linkages from the online application, universal applications, through intake process/front line workers, providers, child care resource and referral agencies or other trusted advisors such as home visitors, pediatricians, faith-based services, etc.? At a minimum, include in your description how you provide information to eligible parents, what you provide and by what methods, and which partners you work with to provide information about other available service programs.

Effective Date: 09/30/2016

a) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

1. How we provide information to eligible parents: Information is provided via the Human and Community Services Division of MT DPHHS website:
<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd>
2. What we provide and by what methods: The information provided includes basic eligibility for TANF cash assistance, a link to the TANF application on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website to download and print, and contact information.
3. Partners we work with: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provide this information to eligible families.

b) Head Start and Early Head Start Programs

1. How we provide information to eligible parents: Information is provided via the Early Childhood Services Bureau website:
<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/HSSCO.aspx>
2. What we provide and by what methods: The information provided includes an option to search for Head Start locations, Montana Head Start and Early Head Start Flyer, Montana Head Start Association Website, and the Montana Head Start Needs Assessments.
3. Partners we work with: We partner with the Montana Head Start Collaboration Office and Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies to provide this information to eligible families.

c) Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

1. How we provide information to eligible parents: Information is provided via the Human and Community Services Division of MT DPHHS website:
<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd>
2. What we provide and by what methods: Information is provided on the website and

includes a link to the LIHEAP Policy Manual.

3. Partners we work with: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provide this information to eligible families.

d) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP- formerly known as Food Stamps)

1. How we provide information to eligible parents: Information is provided via the Human and Community Services Division of MT DPHHS website:
<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd>
2. What we provide and by what methods: Information is provided on the website and includes a program overview and a link to the SNAP Policy Manual.
3. Partners we work with: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provide this information to eligible families.

e) Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)

1. How we provide information to eligible parents: Information is provided via the Montana DPHHS homepage under the title "Children/Families". It is located under the Public Health and Safety Division webpage:
<http://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/WIC.aspx>
2. What we provide and by what methods: Information is provided on the website and includes a program overview, Local Agency Staff, Retailers and other helpful links to information.
3. Partners we work with: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provide this information to eligible families.

f) Child and Adult Care Food Program(CACFP)

1. How we provide information to eligible parents: Information is provided via the ECSB website: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/CACFP.aspx>
2. What we provide and by what methods: The information provided includes an information on applications, civil rights, claims, documents, Federal regulations, Montana policies, and other helpful links.
3. Partners we work with: We partner with the Montana Head Start Collaboration Office and Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies to provide this information to eligible families. The CACFP is housed within the lead agency.

g) Medicaid

1. How we provide information to eligible parents: Information is provided via the Human and Community Services Division of MT DPHHS website:
<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd>
2. What we provide and by what methods: Information is provided on the website and includes a link to Medicaid Client Information, Medicaid Eligibility, Medicaid Provider Information, and Montana Medicaid.

3. Partners we work with: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provide this information to eligible families.

h) Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

1. How we provide information to eligible parents: Information is provided via the Human and Community Services Division of MT DPHHS website under the Healthy Montana Kids (HMK) link: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd>
2. What we provide and by what methods: Information is provided on the website and includes member information, resources, and contact numbers.
3. Partners we work with: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provide this information to eligible families.

i) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

1. How we provide information to eligible parents: Information is provided via the ECSB website [Child Growth and Development](#) page, and in a link to the [Individuals with Disabilities Act \(IDEA\)](#) tab in the 'Other Programs and Services that Support Children and Families in Montana' dropdown menu.
2. What we provide and by what methods: Information is provided on the website and includes information on the IDEA Act, Montana Milestones (Part B and Part C services), and information on how to access developmental screening and referrals in their communities. Developmental screening information is also provided specifically for providers on the website in the Child Growth and Development section.
3. Partners we work with: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Healthy Montana Families (State and Federal home visiting in Montana), and Montana Milestones (Part B and Part C) provide this information to parents/families and providers.

j) Other State/Federally Funded Child Care Programs (e.g., state pre-kindergarten)

[Montana does not have other State/Federally Funded Child Care Programs including state pre-kindergarten, at this time; however, the MT DPHHS/ECSB and the Montana Office of Public Instruction have partnered to facilitate and manage the Montana Preschool Development Grant \(MPDG\). The MPDG is helping to develop state preschool systems in Montana and partners with the STARS to Quality program and other projects to ensure alignment.](#)

k) Other early childhood programs (e.g., Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program)

[A variety of programs and agencies in Montana provide information regarding the availability of human service programs through the membership of the Best Beginnings Advisory](#)

Council (BBAC). The BBAC membership includes representation from the CACFP, Child Care Resource and Referral, Child Protective Services, Early Childhood Project, ESCB, Child Care Licensing, Head Start Association, Montana AEYC, child care providers, higher education institutions, tribal communities, and local community coalition members. The BBAC meets on a quarterly basis and regularly communicates updates that affect human service providers and programs across the state. The information is shared during the quarterly meetings, through meeting minutes available to the public, and representatives that serve as a conduit to share with their staff locally. The BBAC members can request to form a workgroup with interested parties of this group when a need arises. The workgroups have tackled issues regarding the Montana Preschool Development Grant, Child Care Quality, and Developmental Screening. Information regarding the CCDF reauthorization is also shared with the BBAC as a means to broaden the scope of understanding for local providers regarding upcoming changes; and therefore extends the information to parents and clients; and therefore extends the information to parents and clients.

2.2.5 Describe how the State/Territory shares information with providers (where applicable) to link families to these other available human service programs.

For example, does the State/Territory provide information to providers through CCR&R/outreach, as a condition of their contract or voucher agreement, through community-based hub agencies that partner with subsidy providers, county/local collaboration, through quality rating and improvements systems, etc?

Effective Date: 09/30/2016

a) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

1. How we provide information to eligible providers: Information is provided via the Human and Community Services Division of MT DPHHS website:
<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx#458905854-temporary-assistance-for-needy-families-tanf>
2. What we provide and by what methods: The information provided includes basic eligibility for TANF cash assistance, a link to the TANF application on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website to download and print, and contact information.
3. Partners we work with: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provide this information to providers.

b) Head Start and Early Head Start Programs

1. How we provide information to eligible providers: Information is provided via the

ECSB website: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/HSSCO.aspx>

2. What we provide and by what methods: The information provided includes an option to search for Head Start locations, Montana Head Start and Early Head Start Flyer, Montana Head Start Association Website, and the Montana Head Start Needs Assessments.
3. Partners we work with: We partner with the Montana Head Start Collaboration Office and Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies to provide this information to providers.

c) Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

1. How we provide information to eligible providers: Information is provided via the Human and Community Services Division of MT DPHHS website: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx#458905850-low-income-energy-assistance>
2. What we provide and by what methods: Information is provided on the website and includes a link to the LIHEAP Policy Manual.
3. Partners we work with: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provide this information to providers.

d) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP- formerly known as Food Stamps)

1. How we provide information to eligible providers: Information is provided via the Human and Community Services Division of MT DPHHS website: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/Childcare#458905853-supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>
2. What we provide and by what methods: Information is provided on the website and includes a program overview and a link to the SNAP Policy Manual.
3. Partners we work with: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provide this information to providers.

e) Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)

1. How we provide information to eligible parents: Information is provided via the Montana DPHHS homepage under the title "Children/Families". It is located under the Public Health and Safety Division webpage: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/WIC.aspx>
2. What we provide and by what methods: Information is provided on the website and includes a program overview, Local Agency Staff, Retailers and other helpful links to information.
3. Partners we work with: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provide this information to providers.

f) Child and Adult Care Food Program(CACFP)

1. How we provide information to eligible providers: Information is provided via the

ECSB website: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/CACFP.aspx>

2. What we provide and by what methods: The information provided includes an information on applications, civil rights, claims, documents, Federal regulations, Montana policies, and other helpful links.
3. Partners we work with: We partner with the Montana Head Start Collaboration Office and Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies to provide this information to providers.

g) Medicaid

How we provide information to eligible parents: Information is provided via the Human and Community Services Division of MT DPHHS website:

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/Childcare#458905852-montana-medicaid>

1. What we provide and by what methods: Information is provided on the website and includes a link to Medicaid Client Information, Medicaid Eligibility, Medicaid Provider Information, and Montana Medicaid.
2. Partners we work with: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provide this information to providers.

h) Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

1. How we provide information to eligible providers: Information is provided via the Human and Community Services Division of MT DPHHS website under the Healthy Montana Kids (HMK) link: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/Childcare#458905851-healthy-montana-kids-hmk>
2. What we provide and by what methods: Information is provided on the website and includes member information, resources, and contact numbers.
3. Partners we work with: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provide this information to providers.

i) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

1. How we provide information to eligible providers: Information is provided via the ECSB website [Child Growth and Development](#) page, and in a link to the [Individuals with Disabilities Act \(IDEA\)](#) tab in the 'Other Programs and Services that Support Children and Families in Montana' dropdown menu.
2. What we provide and by what methods: Information is provided on the website and includes information on the IDEA Act, Montana Milestones (Part B and Part C services), and information on how to access developmental screening and referrals in their communities. Developmental screening information is also provided specifically for providers on the website in the Child Growth and Development section.
3. Partners we work with: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Healthy Montana Families (State and Federal home visiting in Montana), and Montana Milestones (Part B and Part C) provide this information to parents/families and

providers.

j) Other State/Federally Funded Child Care Programs (example-State Pre-K)

Montana does not have other State/Federally Funded Child Care Programs including state pre-kindergarten, at this time, however, the MT DPHHS/ECSB and the Montana Office of Public Instruction have partnered to facilitate and manage the Montana Preschool Development Grant (MPDG). The MPDG is helping to develop state preschool systems in Montana and partners with the STARS to Quality program and other projects to ensure alignment.

k) Other early childhood programs (e.g., Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program)

A variety of programs and agencies in Montana provide information regarding the availability of human service programs through the membership of the Best Beginnings Advisory Council (BBAC). The BBAC membership includes representation from the CACFP, Child Care Resource and Referral, Child Protective Services, Early Childhood Project, ESCB, Child Care Licensing, Head Start Association, Montana AEYC, child care providers, higher education institutions, tribal communities, and local community coalition members. The BBAC meets on a quarterly basis and regularly communicates updates that affect human service providers and programs across the state. The information is shared during the quarterly meetings, through meeting minutes available to the public, and representatives that serve as a conduit to share with their staff locally. The BBAC members can request to form a workgroup with interested parties of this group when a need arises. The workgroups have tackled issues regarding the Montana Preschool Development Grant, Child Care Quality, and Developmental Screening. Information regarding the CCDF reauthorization is also shared with the BBAC as a means to broaden the scope of understanding for local providers regarding upcoming changes.

2.2.6 Describe how the State/Territory makes available information to parents of eligible children, the general public, and where applicable, providers (see also section 6) about research and best practices in child development, including all domains of early childhood development, including social and emotional development, cognitive, and physical health and development (particularly healthy eating and physical activity), and meaningful parent and family engagement. (658E(c)(2)(E)(VI))

a) Describe how the State/Territory makes information about research and best practices in child development available to 1) parents of eligible children, 2) providers and 3) the general public

Materials are available to order on the Lead Agency's website:

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/DocumentsAndResources>. Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies also have information available to parents of eligible children, providers, and the general public in the form of rack cards, website information, and direct communication through their Provider Services staff who are knowledgeable in early childhood best practices.

b) Describe what you provide and how (i.e., methods such as written materials, direct communication, etc.)

Written materials include: "Fun Family Activities," which is a flip book to help families support children's learning through fun and interactive activities which are designed to fit into family day to day routines; Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge base - this document embraces developmentally appropriate practice for children aged birth through 8; Montana Early Learning Standards represent a continuum of growth and development for children from birth to age 5. Child Care Resource & Referral agencies provide direct communication to providers regarding research and best practices in all trainings that they offer. All training must go through an approval process which includes specifying what Knowledge Base and Early Learning Standards content areas will be incorporated into the training.

c) Describe who you partner with to make information about research and best practices in child development available

The lead agency partners with CCR&R agencies to ensure this information is available, as well as the Best Beginnings Advisory Council and local coalitions, and the Head Start State Collaboration office.

2.2.7 Describe how information on the State/Territory's policies regarding the social-emotional/behavioral and early childhood mental health of young children, which may include positive behavioral intervention and support models, and policies on expulsion of preschool-aged children (from birth to five for purposes of this requirement), in early childhood programs receiving CCDF is collected and disseminated to parents, providers and the general public. (658E(c)(2)(E)(i)(VII))

a) Describe how the State/Territory makes information regarding social-emotional/behavioral and early childhood mental health of young children, which may include positive behavioral intervention support models, available to 1) parents of eligible children, 2) providers and 3) the general public. At minimum, describe **what** you provide (e.g., early childhood mental health consultation services to child care programs) and **how** (i.e., methods such as written materials, direct communication, etc.) for each group:

i. Parents

The 2014 Montana Early Learning Standards [MELS] are available in printed form; included are social-emotional and cognitive standards. The Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base is available in printed form; including cognitive and brain, emotional, and social development. The Lead Agency will provide information regarding home visiting and Part C referrals to parents through the CCR&R.

ii. Providers

The 2014 Montana Early Learning Standards [MELS] are available in printed form; included is social-emotional and cognitive standards. The Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base is available in printed form; including cognitive and brain, emotional, and social development.

Training on the Pyramid Model is available. Additionally, child care providers participating in the STARS to Quality program receive Pyramid Model coaching from Professional Development Specialist from a local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency [CCR&R].

iii. General public

The 2014 Montana Early Learning Standards [MELS] are available in printed form; included are social-emotional and cognitive standards. The Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base is available in printed form; including cognitive and brain, emotional, and social development.

b) Describe any partners used to make information regarding social-emotional/behavioral and early childhood mental health of young children available

The Statewide Pyramid Model Coordinator, Early Childhood Project, and local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies assist in making information available. The Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health [LAUNCH] Grant is working with the lead agency to identify early childhood mental health professionals and resources available for families and children.

c) Does the State have a written policy regarding preventing expulsion of:

Preschool children (from birth to five) in early childhood programs receiving child care assistance?

☐ Yes.

If yes, If yes, describe how the State/Territory makes information about that policy available to parents, providers and the general public (what you provide, how you provide and any partners used) and provide a link

☒ No.

School-age children from programs receiving child care assistance?

☐ Yes.

If yes, describe how the State/Territory makes information about that policy available to 1) parents, 2) providers and 3) the general public (what you provide, how you provide and any partners used) and provide a link

☒ No.

2.2.8 Coordination with Other Partners to Increase Access to Developmental Screenings

The State/Territory must develop and describe procedures for providing information on and referring families to existing developmental screening services. (658E(c)(2)E(ii)) At a minimum, the State/Territory must establish procedures to provide information to families and child care providers on: (1) Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program carried out under Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.) and developmental screening services available under section 619 and part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.); and (2) a description of how a family or child care provider receiving CCDF may utilize the resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for children receiving CCDF who may be at risk for cognitive or other developmental delays, which may include social, emotional, physical, or linguistic delays.

Effective Date: 09/30/2016

Describe the status of the State/Territory's procedures for providing information on and referring families to existing developmental screening services.

- ☒ Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above - by March 1, 2016.

List the Lead Agency policy citation(s) and:

Montana has procedures in place to provide information on and refer families to existing developmental screening services.

a) Describe procedures, including timelines for when infants, toddlers and preschoolers should be screened

The Lead Agency provides information on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website regarding developmental screening, procedures, and referral options for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. It also provides the Bright Futures Well Child Visit Schedule which indicates that an infant/toddler should have a developmental screener completed at least at 9, 18, and 30 months with encouragement to screen more often if concerned. This schedule also includes in depth information on recommended screening for children from birth through 21 years of age. The website also includes information specifically on the Ages and Stages Questionnaires for families and providers, separately, including screening intervals and definitions of the ASQ-3 and the ASQ:SE.

b) Describe how CCDF families or child care providers receiving CCDF may utilize the resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for CCDF children at risk for cognitive or other developmental delays

The Early Childhood Services Bureau website contains two portals; one for providers and one for families. Each portal contains information specific to the audience regarding developmental screening. For parents, it contains FAQ's, referral information, definitions, and resources available in Montana to access developmental screening for their child. For providers, it contains FAQ's definitions, referral sources, and trainers available to train on the use of the ASQ-3 and the ASQ:SE in Montana. ASQ is currently implemented in the system of Early Childhood in MT, including Project LAUNCH, Montana Preschool Development Grant, STARS, and MECHV Home Visiting.

- ☐ Not implemented. If not implemented, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with to complete implementation of this activity

2.2.9 Describe how the State/Territory meets the requirement to maintain a record of substantiated parental complaints. (658E(c)(2)(C))

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) How does the State/Territory define substantiated parental complaint

A complaint is considered to be substantiated (validated) when the licensing worker determines that the complaint allegations occurred or are occurring or that a regulation violation occurred during the investigation.

b) How does the State/Territory maintain a record of substantiated parental complaints about providers (e.g., how long are records maintained and in what format)

The Child Care Licensing Program maintains all complaints in the child care database (CCUBS). The information maintained in this system includes the information provided by the complainant, persons involved, details found during the investigation, and allegations and assessments. During the complaint intake, the individual making the complaint is asked

whether they want to be notified after completion of the investigation. This is documented on the intake form. For on-line complaints, there is a section that asks whether the reporter wants to be informed. If the individual responds that they do want to be informed, a letter is sent after the department has received a Plan of Correction from the provider. The letter indicates whether or not the complaint was validated. The letter also provides instructions on how the inspection report can be viewed on the public web portal. In addition, validated complaint information is available on the Child Care Licensing Public Web Portal, which is located at <http://dphhs.mt.gov/qad/Licensure/Child-Care-Licensing-Find-Child-Care>. The information available in CCUBS is maintained permanently. The information available on the public portal includes inspection information since 2009. A copy of the inspection and any correspondence is also maintained in the facility file. This information is kept in the file until it meets the retention schedule of 4 years.

c) How does the State/Territory make substantiated parental complaints available to the public on request

The deficiencies found during a complaint investigation are posted on the Child Care Licensing public portal. If the complaint is not validated, the complaint information is not available to the public.

d) Describe how the State/Territory defines and maintains complaints from others about providers

The process is the same as listed under (b) which states: the Child Care Licensing Program maintains all complaints in the child care database (CCUBS). The information maintained in this system includes the information provided by the complainant, persons involved, details found during the investigation, and allegations and assessments. During the complaint intake, the individual making the complaint is asked whether they want to be notified after completion of the investigation. This is documented on the intake form. For on-line complaints, there is a section that asks whether the reporter wants to be informed. If the individual responds that they do want to be informed, a letter is sent after the department has received a Plan of Correction from the provider. The letter indicates whether the complaint was validated or not. The letter also provides instructions on how they can view the inspection report on the public web portal. The results would indicate whether complaints related to the provider were validated or not validated. In addition, validated complaint information is available on the Child Care Licensing Public Web Portal, which is located at <http://dphhs.mt.gov/qad/Licensure/Child-Care-Licensing-Find-Child-Care>. The information available in CCUBS is maintained permanently. The information available on the public portal includes inspection information since 2009. A copy of the inspection and any

correspondence is also maintained in the facility file. This information is kept in the file until it meets the retention schedule which is 4 years.

2.2.10 How will the Lead Agency or partners provide outreach and services to eligible families for whom English is not their first language?

Check the strategies, if any, that your State/Territory has chosen to implement.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- ☒ Application in other languages (application document, brochures, provider notices)
- ☒ Informational materials in non-English languages
- ☐ Training and technical assistance in non-English languages
- ☐ Website in non-English languages
- ☐ Lead Agency accepts applications at local community-based locations
- ☒ Bilingual caseworkers or translators available
- ☐ Bilingual outreach workers
- ☐ Partnerships with community-based organizations
- ☒ Other

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/detd/mtap/mtapmtrelay/typesofcalls.aspx>

☐ None

2.2.11 If the Lead Agency checked any option above related to providing information or services in other non-English languages, please list the primary languages offered (top 3) or specify that the State/Territory has the ability to have translation/interpretation in all primary and secondary languages

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Currently, Montana offers translation services through telephone. Language interpreters are available for Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Somali, and others. Dialect options are also available if needed.

2.2.12 Describe how the Lead Agency or partners provide outreach and services to eligible persons with disabilities

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

The lead agency works with the Best Beginnings Advisory Council [BBAC] and local Child Care Resource and Referral [CCR&R] agencies to provide outreach to eligible persons with disabilities. Through BBAC, accommodations can be identified by working with representatives. CCR&R agencies travel to different locations within their region to offer services, can have alternative business hours, can communicate through email, telephone, or fax, and have computers and internet available for an eligible person with disabilities.

2.3 Website for Consumer Education

The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a requirement that States and Territories have a website describing processes for licensing and monitoring child care providers, processes for conducting criminal background checks, and offenses that prevent individuals from being child care providers, and aggregate information on the number of deaths, serious injuries and child abuse.

The State/Territory must make public certain information about the results of such monitoring on a website in a way that is consumer-friendly and in an easily accessible format. (658E(c)(2)(D)) In order for a website to be a useful tool for parents, it should be easy to navigate, with a minimum number of clicks, and in plain language. States and Territories must post the results of the monitoring on the website no later than November 19, 2017. All other components of the website must be completed no later than September 30, 2016.

2.3.1 Describe the status of State/Territory's consumer education website.

Effective Date: 09/30/2016

- ☒ Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above - by March 1, 2016.

Provide the link to the website: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx>

and describe how the consumer education website meets the requirements to:

- a) Share provider-specific information about health and safety, licensing or regulatory requirements met by the provider (including the last date of inspection, and any history of violations). Describe

The Child Care Licensing Program has inspection information available on their website, <http://dphhs.mt.gov/qad/Licensure/LBCCCL.aspx>, with a link included on the Lead Agency website, <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx>. The Child Care Licensing website includes general provider information, as well as all inspections and history. Health and safety information is included on the Lead Agency website which is linked to the Child Care Licensing website. The child care regulations are also available online.

- b) Include a description of health and safety requirements and licensing or regulatory requirements for child care providers. Describe

The licensing or regulatory requirements for child care providers are listed on the Child Care Licensing website (<http://dphhs.mt.gov/qad/Licensure/Become-a-Child-Care-Provider/Family-Group-New-Application-Packet/Family-Group-Renewal-Application-Packet/Extended-Facility-Information/Child-Care-Regulation-for-Infant-Child-Facilities>). There is a link on the Lead Agency website (<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx>) that will connect to this information, as well. The Health and Safety requirements are included on the Lead Agency website under the FAQ for providers.

- c) Include a description of the processes for licensing, background checks, monitoring, and offenses that prevent individuals from being providers. Describe

Background Checks:

The Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) require background checks be completed for child care providers, caregivers, staff members working in a facility and all adult household members. The following types of background checks are: a search of the Child Protective Services Database, Montana Department of Motor Vehicles records check, Montana criminal record check, and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) criminal record fingerprint check, if the person has lived out of Montana in the last 5 years. The process for background checks is all facilities must submit paperwork on new personnel within 15 days of hire. No caregiver, household member, or staff member will be approved until the background checks have been completed. Once background checks are completed, the results of that check are reviewed and it is determined whether the

individual meets criteria for approval. The results of background checks are not publically released. This information is included on the Lead Agency website at <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx>.

Monitoring:

Information on the monitoring practices of child care licensing is posted on the [Lead Agency's website](#), as well as on the [Child Care Licensing website](#) with a clear path linking the information.

Disqualifying Offenses:

The following offences automatically disqualify an individual from being approved per ARM 37.95.176: Homicide, sexual intercourse without consent, sexual assault, aggravated assault, assault on a minor, assault on an officer, assault with a weapon, kidnapping, aggravated kidnapping, prostitution, robbery, burglary; Crime pertaining to children or families; Felony drug related offense within the last 5 years; Conviction of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an elderly person or a person with a developmental disability.

The following offenses may disqualify an individual from being approved: Misdemeanor partner/family member assault, endangering welfare of a child, unlawful transaction with children, or crime involving an abuse of the public trust; and substantiation of child abuse or neglect. This information is included on the Lead Agency website at <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx>

d) Provide information about the number of deaths, number of serious injuries as defined by the State/Territory and the number of incidences of substantiated child abuse in child care settings. Describe

The information about the number of deaths, numbers of serious injuries as defined by Montana and the number of incidences of substantiated child about in child care settings are included in a report format on the Lead Agency website and is updated annually by the Child Care Licensing Bureau to be posted on the website.

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx>.

e) Describe how the website is consumer-friendly, for example, allowing multiple ways to search for providers, defining terms such as exempt care and corrective action plans, presents the results of monitoring inspections in plain language, providing frequently asked questions, is accessible in multiple languages upon request and to persons with disabilities through multiple formats, differentiating between violations based on risk to

children, and easy to locate and navigate. Describe

The Lead Agency has redesigned their webpage to include three separate entry points depending on the consumer; parents, providers, and other. The information included in each portal is tailored to the specific consumer. For example, developmental screening information is included on both the 'parent' and 'provider' tabs but the information is presented based on whether the consumer is a parent or provider. This approach limits the amount of information a particular consumer must sift through in order to find information. The Child Care Licensing Portal allows for providers to be search in multiple ways as well as search for all monitoring results.

The Lead Agency provides a chart to describe the different types of child care available in Montana that includes information on exempt care such as drop-in and unlicensed pre-school programs. The Child Care Licensing Program updated the frequently asked questions list and this information is available on-line. Information about violations and corrective action plans is included within the information about monitoring. The Child Care Licensing Program and Early Childhood Services Bureau have agreed to use the ECSB website as the primary landing page for information with links between both sites when necessary. The Lead Agency also has developed a Frequently Asked Questions guide that serves as a general overview of what is required to become a licensed provider in Montana. This guide, along with all other information posted on the website, is accessible in multiple languages and to persons with disabilities when requested.

- ☐ Not implemented. If not implemented, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date. Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016 for all components of the website except posting the results of the monitoring on the website which is November 19, 2017)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with to complete implementation of this activity

3 Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families

The expanded purposes of CCDBG highlight the opportunities States and Territories have to "deliver high-quality, coordinated early childhood care and education services to maximize parents' options and support parents trying to achieve independence from public assistance"; and "to improve child care and development of participating children." (658A(b)) Young children learn in the context of their relationships with adults, including their child care teacher or provider. The unintentional consequence of child care assistance that is linked to adult work and school obligation is that child care arrangements - and the opportunity for children to form trusting relationships with teachers - are often interrupted and unstable. Child care financial assistance policies that make it easier to get and keep assistance support continuity of care and relationships between the child and child care provider and enable parents to stay employed or complete training/education. Child care support that extends until families are able to pay the full cost of care themselves promotes longer lasting economic stability for families. CCDF funds may support families until they reach 85% of State Median Income (SMI).

The CCDBG Act of 2014 included requirements to establish minimum 12-month eligibility and redetermination periods, requiring that States and Territories have a process to account for irregular fluctuations in earnings, a policy ensuring that families' work schedules are not disrupted by program requirements, policies to provide for job search of not less than three (3) months, and to describe policies for graduated phase-out of assistance. The definition of an eligible child includes that a family's assets may not exceed \$1,000,000 (as certified by a member of such family). Procedures for enrollment of homeless children pending completion of documentation are also now required. There is nothing in statute to prohibit States from establishing policies that extend eligibility beyond 12 months or establish other similar policies

to align program requirements that allow children enrolled in Head Start, Early Head Start, state or local pre-kindergarten and other collaborative programs to finish the program year and to promote continuity for families receiving services through multiple benefits programs.

3.1 Eligible Children and Families

In order to be eligible for services, children must (1) be under the age of 13, (2) reside with a family whose income does not exceed 85 percent of the State's median income for a family of the same size, and whose family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000 (as certified by a member of such family); and who (3)(a) resides with a parent or parents who are working or attending a job training or educational program; or (b) is receiving, or needs to receive, protective services and resides with a parent or parents not described in (3a.). (658P(4))

3.1.1 Eligibility Criteria Based upon Child's Age

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) The CCDF program serves children from 0 (weeks/months/years) to 12 years (through age 12).

b) Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children age 13 and above but below age 19 years who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care?(658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3))



Yes, and the upper age is 18 (may not equal or exceed age 19). Provide the Lead Agency definition of physical or mental incapacity: Physical or mental incapacity is defined as children under the age of 19 with disabilities or cognitive delays who are not able to properly manage or care for his/her person without assistance. Appropriate clinical authorities must document this determination.



No

c) Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children age 13 and above but below age 19 years who are under court supervision? (658P(3), 658E(c)(3)(B))



Yes and the upper age is 18 (may not equal or exceed age 19)



No.

3.1.2 How does the Lead Agency define the following eligibility terms?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) residing with -

A child must live in the same household as the parent, or person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare, during the period for which child care services are requested.

b) in loco parentis -

The lead agency does not use the term "in loco parentis." Instead the term used is "individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare."

3.1.3 Eligibility Criteria Based on Reason for Care

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) How does the Lead Agency define "working, attending job training and education" for the purposes of eligibility at the point of determination? Provide a brief description below, including allowable activities and if a minimum number of hours is required by State/Territory (not a federal requirement).

* working:

To be eligible for a Non-TANF Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship, parents must be employed at paid legal labor or self-employed earning minimum wage, and meet a minimum hourly work requirement each month:

- Low-income working families with an income under 150% of poverty must meet one of the following minimum hourly work requirements each month:
- Two-parent families shall work a minimum of 120 hours per month with either/or both parents working any combination of hours.
- In two-parent families where one parent is a full time student and one parent is a part-time student, the work requirement is 60 hours a month.
- Single-parent families shall work a minimum of 60 hours per month.
- Single parents attending school/training part-time as defined by the institution, shall work a minimum of 40 hours per month.

- When one parent of an intact family is incarcerated or in a pre-release program ordered by the court, the other parent must meet the minimum hourly work requirement of 60 hours until the time the incarcerated parent returns to the household. Should this parent be a full time student, then the parent would not have to meet a work requirement.

The minimum hourly work requirement for a parent unable to provide care for the child may be waived if the following conditions are met:

- A working parent who has a severe disability which prevents them from meeting a minimum hourly work requirement or the parent is unable to provide care for the child is not required to meet an hourly work requirement to qualify for Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship for employment hours. In a two parent household, if one parent is disabled and unable to work, the remaining parent must meet the single parent work requirement.
- In a two-parent household, if one parent has a disability and is unable to care for his/her child[ren], the work requirement for the disabled parent may be waived.

* attending job training

Job Training is a program designed to assist eligible families to become self-sufficient by providing needed employment-related activities and supportive services. Job training programs include, but are not limited to, WoRC and special classes which may be classified as "employment related training."

A person is considered to be attending job training, whether part-time or full-time, if they remain in good standing as defined by the institution, with either the job training or education program in which they are enrolled. Child care is allowed for scheduled class time and the time necessary to commute between the parent's home, the child care facility and the education or training facility.

* attending education

Educational Program refers to a program that is accredited by the State of Montana. Educational programs include, but are not limited to, vocational technical schools, business colleges, junior colleges, universities, and/or special classes, which may be classified as "employment related training." It also includes those out-of-state programs that meet the criteria stipulated in Section 2-3 such as distance learning.

- Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships are provided for employment time and out-of-home classroom time, when attending school or training.
- If the family meets the eligibility requirements for employment, a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may be available to parents attending post-secondary education, vocational training, high school or General Educational Development [GED] equivalency programs which will lead to a recognized occupation for which jobs exist within Montana. [Refer to

Department of Labor information regarding employment in Montana]. All of the following restrictions apply:

- Parents must achieve satisfactory training progress as defined by the approved training institution and as defined in Section 1-3. Number of credits parent is enrolled in must be verified through class schedule and fee receipts.
- Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships are not available to pursue post-secondary education above a bachelor's degree. Master's and doctoral students' school hours do not qualify for a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship.
- Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships are not available for training and education activities if a parent has earned a post-secondary education degree or training certificate within the last five years.
 - NOTE: A student who enrolls in a continuous four-year program, which happens to issue a two-year certificate or degree at the midpoint of the student's intended educational goal, is not subject to this five-year limitation.
- If the parent received the last post-secondary education degree or training certificate over five years ago, a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may be allowed for a second certificate or bachelor's degree.
- The work requirement may be waived during a period of short-term, fulltime training, which leads to a high probability of employment. All of the following restrictions apply:
 - The training may last no more than six weeks.
 - The training must be required for employment.
 - The applicant shall provide a written training verification signed by the approved training institution.
 - The applicant shall have a letter from a potential employer stating that there is a high probability of employment upon completion.
- Low-income teen parents (through age 19) attending high school, GED or an equivalency program do not have a minimum work requirement.

Distance Learning/On-line coursework a student receives from a college or university accredited by the U.S. Department of Education (<http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>) is acceptable if, in addition to fulfilling all other eligibility requirements outlined in this section, the student is formally enrolled in the college or university and has an educational plan and projected graduation date.

b) ☒ Is the Lead Agency allow parents to qualify for CCDF assistance on the basis of education and training participation alone (without additional minimum work requirements)?

☐

Yes.

No.

If no, describe additional requirements

c) Does the Lead Agency provide child care to children in protective services?

☒ Yes. If yes, how does the Lead Agency define "protective services" for the purposes of eligibility? Provide a brief description below.

1) Definition of protective services -

Child Care is available for children in protective care because of the danger of neglect or abuse. The need for protective services child care is determined by community social workers. Child Protective Services is currently defined as the Department of Public Health and Human Services Child Protective Services System. Children in child protective services are designated as a household of one in the child care subsidy computer system and uniquely identified; therefore, the state does not attach a co-payment requirement to these minor children. On rare occasions, the state may broadly define protective services, through the state's hardship policy. Cases that are approved due to hardship policy are paid for with state funds. The hardship policy provides for limited approval for child care assistance in rare situations that a family may not be otherwise eligible, with approval from the lead agency manager. For example, kinship care outside of the formal DPHHS Child Protective Services.

2) Does the Lead Agency waive the co-payment and income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services on a case-by-case basis? (658E(c)(5))

☒ Yes.

☐ No.

Note - If the Lead Agency elects to provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care whose foster care parents are not working, or who are not in education/training activities for CCDF purposes these children are considered to be in protective services and should be included in the protective services definition above.

☐ No.

3.1.4 Eligibility Criteria Based on Family Income

Effective Date: 07/01/2016

a) How does the Lead Agency define "income" for the purposes of eligibility at the point of determination?

* Definition of income -

Montana determines eligibility for the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship funded by the CCDF using gross family income, including all family members; yet do allow for some income exclusions. Income exclusions may be based in part on the status of an individual in the household. For example, the earned income of a dependent child is excluded if the child is attending school.

Additionally, the Administrative Rules of Montana require families with absent parents to verify court ordered child support income, or register with Child Support Enforcement, in an attempt to reduce the family's child care needs.

b) Provide the CCDF income eligibility limits in the table below. **Complete** columns (a) and (b) based upon maximum eligibility initial entry into the CCDF program. Complete Columns (c) and (d) **ONLY IF** the Lead Agency is using income eligibility limits lower than 85% of the current SMI. Complete columns (e) and (f) with the maximum "exit" eligibility level if applicable and below the federal limit of 85% of current SMI.

☐ **Note** - If the income eligibility limits are not statewide, check here

Describe how many jurisdictions set their own income eligibility limits

Fill in the chart based on the most populous area of the state.

Family Size	(a) 100% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month)	(b) 85% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month) [Multiply (a) by 0.85]	(c) (IF APPLICABLE) \$/month Maximum "Entry" Income Level if lower than 85% Current SMI	(d) (IF APPLICABLE) % of SMI [Divide (c) by (a), multiply by 100] Income Level if lower than 85% Current SMI	(e) (IF APPLICABLE) \$/month Maximum "Exit" Income Level if lower than 85% Current SMI	(f) (IF APPLICABLE) % of SMI [Divide (e) by (a), multiply by 100] Income Level if lower than 85% Current SMI
1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	3942	3351	2003	51	2655	67
3	4869	4139	2520	52	3348	69
4	5796	4927	3038	52	4042	70
5	6724	5715	3555	53	4735	70

Reminder - Income limits must be provided in terms of current State Median Income (SMI) (or Territory Median Income) even if federal poverty level is used in implementing the program. Federal [poverty guidelines](http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/index.cfm) are available at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/index.cfm>.

c) SMI Source and year

<http://www.liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/profiles/povertytables/FY2015/mtsmi.htm> for 2015

d) These eligibility limits in column (c) became or will become effective on: **07/01/2016**

e) Provide the link to the income eligibility limits

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/hcsd/documents/ChildCare/documentsandresources>

3.1.5 Graduated Phase-Out of Assistance

The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a provision that requires States and Territories to provide for a graduated phase-out of assistance for families whose income has increased at the time of re-determination, but remains below the federal threshold of 85% of State median income. Providing a graduated phase-out supports long-term family economic stability by allowing for wage growth and a tapered transition out of the child care subsidy program. (658E (c)(2)(N)(iv)) This might be achieved through policies such as establishing a second income eligibility threshold at redetermination (e.g., establishing a different eligibility threshold for families first applying for assistance and those already receiving assistance, sometimes called an "exit threshold") or by granting a sustained period of continued assistance to the family before termination.

Effective Date: 07/01/2016

Describe the status of the State/Territory's policy regarding graduated phase-out of assistance.

- ☒ Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above by March 1, 2016.

List the Lead Agency's policy citation(s) and describe the policies and procedures for graduated phase-out

[A graduated phase-out of assistance for families whose income has increased at the time of re-determination, but remains below the federal threshold of 85% of State median income \[SMI\]. Montana's Graduated Phase Out will have a ceiling level at 185% of the FPL. Using 185% of FPL is the level used to ensure the participant income remains below the 85% of Montana's SMI threshold. Higher percentages of the FPL were too](#)

close or above 85% SMI. Since initial eligibility for the child care subsidy uses FPL, the same logic was used to continue to use the FPL instead of the SMI to determine entrance into graduated-phase out. Montana plans to include its Graduated Phase out plan beginning July 1, 2016. The bulletin process will be used for implementation prior to completion of the Policy/Rule making process is complete. When finished, the policy citation will be Section 2-1 page 10 of 10. Once a family already on the program exceeds the 150% of FPG but does not exceed 185% FPG, they will transition to Graduated Phase Out for 6 months .

- ☐ Not implemented. The State must provide a State-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste tables here. Your responses here will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's status toward complete implementation for any requirement(s) not fully implemented (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

3.1.6 Fluctuation in Earnings

The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a requirement that the Plan shall demonstrate how the State/Territory's (or designated local entity) processes for initial determination and redetermination take into account irregular fluctuations in earnings. (658E(c)(2)(N)(i)(II))

Note - this change requires that States and Territories have policies to account for the fact that some parents with seasonal or other types of work schedules may have irregular earnings over the course of a year, including changes that temporarily exceed 85% of SMI. States and Territories should have procedures to guide how eligibility and copayments are set in a manner to take such circumstances into account. For example, averaging family income over a period of time to broaden the scope of income verification to be more reflective of annual income rather than tied to a limited time frame that may have seasonal irregularities.

Effective Date: 10/01/2016

Describe the status of the State/Territory's policy related to the fluctuation in earnings requirement.

- ☒ Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above by March 1, 2016.

List the Lead Agency's policy citation(s) and describe the circumstances that cover irregular fluctuations of earnings pursuant to this requirement

The following policy is from Policy Section 2-5: "Fluctuations in income do not affect the eligibility of the household during a 12-month eligibility period. Income can be calculated using at least a two-month but up to twelve-month average of earnings for that may be irregular or seasonal."

The following policy is from Policy Section 6-5: "If a parent reports an increase in income, a What-If Analysis will be done to see what the copayment would be for the parent. The case will be re-determined only if the parent requests. The What-If Analysis is used to advise the parent of the effect on eligibility and copayment at the next annual redetermination."

- ☐ Not implemented. If not implemented, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or

tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's status toward complete implementation for any requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

3.1.7 Describe how the Lead Agency documents, verifies and maintains applicant information.

Check the information that the Lead Agency documents. There are no federal requirements for specific documentation or verification procedures.

Reminder - Lead Agencies are reminded that, for purposes of implementing the citizenship verification requirements mandated by title IV of Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, only the citizenship and immigration status of the child, who is the primary beneficiary of the child care benefit, is relevant for eligibility purposes (ACYF-PI-CC-98-08). States may not deny child care benefits to an eligible child because the parent(s), legal guardians, persons standing in loco parentis, or other household members have not provided information regarding their immigration status. In addition, verification of child citizen status is not required when the child is served in a program meeting Early Head Start/Head Start standards, such as in Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships, or public educational

standards which may include pre-k settings (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/pi-2008-01>).

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Applicant identity.

Describe:

Applicants may have an interview either in person or by telephone during the initial application period. Applicants must include photo identification documents: government issued identification, passport, Montana driver's license, or a school identification card. If the family is receiving Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program [SNAP] benefits, the verification can be obtained from the Combined Healthcare Information and Montana Eligibility System [CHIMES].

Documentation of what was used to determine the applicant's identity is included in case notes in the database, Child Care Under the Big Sky [CCUBS]. Paper documents are kept at the Child Care Resource & Referral agency that maintains the confidential files for the applicant.

The information is required at initial application, but then it is kept in the confidential file at the Child Care Resource & Referral agency. At annual re-determination, information already on file does not need to be submitted again. However, if case has a lapse in eligibility, then the information may be required again.

☒ Applicant's relationship to the child.

Describe:

Birth certificates are used to verify both the child's age and relationship to the applicant. Legal or court documentation is used to verify the applicant's relationship to the child if the child is adopted or a foster child. Documentation from Child Protective Services [CPS] can be used, if applicable. If the applicant has a Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program [SNAP] case, the relationship established by the other agency can be used.

Documentation of what was used to determine the applicant's identity is included in case notes in the database, Child Care Under the Big Sky [CCUBS]. Paper documents are kept at the Child Care Resource & Referral agency that maintains the confidential files for the applicant.

The information is required at initial application, but then it is kept in the confidential file at the Child Care Resource & Referral agency. At annual re-determination, information already on file does not need to be submitted again. However, if case has a lapse in eligibility, then the information may be required again.

☒ Child's information for determining eligibility (e.g., identity, age, etc.).

Describe:

Children receiving child care assistance must be US citizens or US nationals. Their status is verified through birth certificates or passports. A Social Security card is optional to use as verification. If the applicant has a Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program [SNAP] case, the child's citizenship or status has already been approved to another agency, no additional documentation is needed.

Documentation of what was used to determine the applicant's identity is included in case notes in the database, Child Care Under the Big Sky [CCUBS]. Paper documents are kept at the Child Care Resource & Referral agency that maintains the confidential files for the applicant.

The information is required at initial application, but then it is kept in the confidential file at the Child Care Resource & Referral agency. At annual re-determination, information already on file does not need to be submitted again. However, if case has a lapse in eligibility, then the information may be required again. Any new child added to a family's case will be required to provide the new information.

☒ Work.

Describe:

Applicants complete a Work Verification Form signed by the employer at the time of initial application or with a job change. At annual re-determination, participants submit paystubs. Self-employment is verified through a self- statement attestation which is a self-employment form filled out by the applicant. Supporting documentation for income would be requested. Documentation of what was used to determine the applicant's identity is included in case notes in the database, Child Care Under the Big Sky [CCUBS]. Paper documents are kept at the Child Care Resource & Referral agency that maintains the confidential files for the applicant.

The information is required at initial application, but then it is kept in the confidential file at the Child Care Resource & Referral agency. At annual re-determination, if case has a lapse in eligibility, or if the parent changes to a different job, a new Work Verification Form or paystubs will be required.

☒ Job Training or Educational Program.

Describe:

A parent has a work requirement when attending school part-time, but no work requirement when attending school full-time. The parent must submit receipt of fees paid and number of

credits enrolled in to prove the attendance of school.

Documentation of what was used to determine the applicant's identity is included in case notes in the database, Child Care Under the Big Sky [CCUBS]. Paper documents are kept at the Child Care Resource & Referral agency that maintains the confidential files for the applicant.

The information is required at initial application, but then it is kept in the confidential file at the Child Care Resource & Referral agency. At annual re-determination, if case has a lapse in eligibility, or at the beginning of a new semester, a new receipt of fees paid and number of credits enrolled in will be required.

☒ Family Income.

Describe:

Applicants complete a work verification form signed by their employer or submit consecutive wage stubs for the prior 60 days.

Self-employed applicants must meet Federal minimum wage requirement to qualify for child care assistance. Self-employed individuals will need to provide written documentation verifying their self-employment status at the time of application. This may be done using several types of documentation: Business License issued by the city or state; Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) issued by the Internal Revenue Service; or IRS Tax forms, which include Schedule C or Schedule C-EZ, 1040-ES, and Estimated Tax for Individuals.

Documentation of what was used to determine the child's eligibility is included in case notes in the database, Child Care Under the Big Sky [CCUBS]. Paper documents are kept at the Child Care Resource & Referral Service that maintains the confidential files for the applicant.

The information is required at initial application, but then it is kept in the confidential file at the Child Care Resource & Referral agency. At annual re-determination, if case has a lapse in eligibility, or if the parent changes to a different job, or if the parent requests the case to be re-determined for a lowered copayment, income documentation will be required.

☒ Household composition.

Describe:

Application signature certifies that information is true, accurate, and complete. Corroborative information such as rent receipts or lease agreements can be used by the Eligibility Specialist should there be a question on household membership.

Documentation of what was used to determine the child's eligibility is included in case notes

in the database, Child Care Under the Big Sky [CCUBS]. Paper documents are kept at the Child Care Resource & Referral Service that maintains the confidential files for the applicant.

The information is required at initial application, at annual re-determination, if case has a lapse in eligibility, or a new child is added to the case, documentation will be required.

☒ Applicant Residence.

Describe:

Applicants submit proof of residency such as a rental agreement, utilities bill, or a current Montana Driver's License.

Documentation of what was used to determine the child's eligibility is included in case notes in the database, Child Care Under the Big Sky [CCUBS]. Paper documents are kept at the Child Care Resource & Referral Service that maintains the confidential files for the applicant.

The information is required at initial application, but then it is kept in the confidential file at the Child Care Resource & Referral agency. At annual re-determination, information already on file does not need to be submitted again. However, if case has a lapse in eligibility, then the information may be required again.

☒ Other.

Describe:

Express Eligibility - Applicants participating in Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program [SNAP] are asked if they are receiving Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program [SNAP] benefits on their application for child care assistance. The Eligibility Specialist then uses income information already documented on the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program [SNAP] case to determine eligibility. This approach reduces the amount of document verification needed to qualify applicants.

The information is checked at initial application and at annual re-determination.

Reminder - Lead Agencies are reminded that, for purposes of implementing the citizenship verification requirements mandated by title IV of Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, only the citizenship and immigration status of the child, who is the primary beneficiary of the child care benefit, is relevant for eligibility purposes (ACYF-PI-CC-98-08). States may not deny child care benefits to an eligible child because the parent(s), legal guardians, persons standing in loco parentis, or other household members have not provided information regarding their immigration status. In addition, verification of child citizen status is not required when the child is served in a program meeting Early Head Start/Head Start standards, such as in Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships, or public

educational standards which may include pre-k settings
(<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/pi-2008-01>).

3.1.8 Which strategies, if any, will the Lead Agency use to assure the timeliness of eligibility determinations upon receipt of applications?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Time limit for making eligibility determinations.

Describe length of time :

Once the initial application is reviewed, the Child Care Resource and Referral [CCR&R] staff must review the application packet within seven calendar days to ensure timely processing. The applicant has thirty calendar days to get all required documentation in.

☒ Track and monitor the eligibility determination process

☒ Other.

Describe:

Supervisors at each Child Care Resource & Referral [CCR&R] complete case reviews given to them monthly by Early Childhood Services Bureau [ECSB].

☐ None

3.1.9 Informing parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the TANF work requirement

Per CCDF regulations, Lead Agencies are required to inform parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the work requirement for any single custodial parent who has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care for a child under 6 years of age (98.16(9) and 98.33(b)). This requirement did not change under the reauthorization. Lead Agencies must coordinate with TANF programs to ensure, pursuant that TANF families with young children will be informed of their right not to be sanctioned if they meet the criteria set forth by the State TANF agency in accordance with section 407(e)(2) of the Social Security Act.

In fulfilling this requirement, the following criteria or definitions are applied by the TANF agency to determine whether the parent has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care.

NOTE: The TANF agency, not the CCDF Lead Agency, is responsible for establishing the following criteria or definitions. These criteria or definitions are offered in this Plan as a matter of public record.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) Identify the TANF agency that established these criteria or definitions:

State/Territory TANF Agency [The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Public Assistance Bureau](#)

b) Provide the following definitions established by the TANF agency.

"appropriate child care":

[The child care provider meets applicable state standards.](#)

"reasonable distance":

[If the family is without either their own \(or arranged\) transportation, and there is no public transportation, then their home or work site must be no more than 1 mile from the child care provider.](#)

"unsuitability of informal child care":

[Care that does not meet applicable state licensing standards, although it may be the parent's choice.](#)

"affordable child care arrangements":

[The total parental \(caretaker relative or person acting in loco parentis\) co-payment and "above and beyond" obligation does not exceed 25% of gross family income.](#)

c) How are parents who receive TANF benefits informed about the exception to individual penalties associated with the TANF work requirements?

☒ In writing

☒ Verbally

☒ Other.

Describe:

[Families participating in the TANF program are not sanctioned due to lack of child care. When child care is not available, TANF eligibility managers and parents negotiate activities that do not require child care to maintain their family investment agreement. Child care is identified as a good-cause exception for families unable to complete TANF activities. If a parent is involved in the TANF sanction process, the parent is informed in writing of the right to claim good cause.](#)

☒ List the citation to this TANF policy.

List:

[TANF 701-3 Participation Components: No Child Care/Long Term, Page 16 of 17](#)

[The following is a link to the TANF Policy Manual:](#)

3.1.10 The Lead Agency certifies that it will require a family member to certify that the family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000. A check-off on the application is sufficient

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- ☒ Yes. The Lead Agency certifies that it will require families to certify that the family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000 no later than September 30, 2016.

3.2 Increasing Access for Vulnerable Children and Families

At a minimum, CCDF requires Lead Agencies to give priority for child care assistance to children with special needs, or in families with very low incomes. This did not change under reauthorization. Prioritization of CCDF assistance services is not limited to eligibility determination (i.e., establishment of a waiting list or ranking of eligible families in priority order to be served). Lead Agencies may fulfill priority requirements in other ways such as higher payment rates for providers caring for children with special needs or waiving co-payments for families with very low incomes (at or below the federal poverty level). (658E(c)(3)(B))

3.2.1 Describe how the Lead Agency will prioritize or target child care services for the following children and families (658E(c)(3)(B)), including definitions, any time limits, grace periods or priority rules in the description:

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- a. Provide definition of "Children with special needs": A child with special needs means a child who is age 18 or younger who requires additional assistance because of an emotional or physical disability and/or cognitive delay that is verified by medical records or other appropriate documentation such as written verification of the physical, emotional, or mental disability from the appropriate authority.

and describe how services are prioritized:

a. A higher reimbursement rate is paid to child care providers caring for children with special needs. Child care providers are required to make a reasonable accommodation for children with special needs. If care requirements increase the cost of the care, one-time or on-going costs may be paid from the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship. Additionally, families who have children with special needs are given priority and are not subject to the waiting list.

b. Provide definition of "Families with very low incomes": A family, whose income is at or below the TANF eligibility threshold of the 2015 federal poverty guidelines, pays a \$10.00 monthly co-payment. If Montana instituted a waiting list, families with very low income would receive child care subsidy prior to other families who may be eligible based on the income guidelines. Higher copayments are a product of the family's Non-TANF gross monthly income (GMI) multiplied by the respective co-payment factor: $\text{Monthly Co-payment} = \text{GMI} \times \text{Percentage assigned to the Income Range}$.

and describe how services are prioritized:

a. Because we do not have a waiting list, Montana defines very low income as any family that earns less than 150% of the determined Federal Poverty Guidelines for their family size. If a waiting list is to be imposed in the future, the state has priorities set in policy. These priorities can be found at www.bestbeginnings.mt.gov.

c. Describe how services for families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), those attempting to transition off TANF through work activities, and those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF are prioritized (Section 418(b)(2) of the Social Security Act) Priority rules will be used to meet the needs of TANF families. Priority is given to families who have children with special needs, teen parents attending high school, GED, or equivalency programs, and families with lower income, relative to family size.

3.2.2 Improving Access for Homeless Children and Families.

The CCDBG Act of 2014 places greater emphasis on serving homeless children and families. Stable access to high-quality child care provides tremendous benefits to all children, especially our most vulnerable children. Children and families who experience homelessness face many challenges. Improving access to child care can buffer children and families from the challenges and risks associated with homelessness by supporting children's learning and development in safe, stable and nurturing environments. Under the new law, States and Territories are required to use CCDF funds to 1) allow homeless children to receive CCDF assistance after an initial

eligibility determination but before providing required documentation (including documentation related to immunizations); 2) providing training and technical assistance to child care providers on identifying and serving homeless children and families (addressed in Section 6); and 3) conduct specific outreach to homeless families. (658E(c)(3))

States and Territories also must establish a grace period that allows homeless children and children in foster care (if served by the Lead Agency) to receive CCDF assistance while their families are taking the necessary actions to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements as described in Section 5. This flexibility will make it significantly easier for these vulnerable families to access child care services. This language is consistent with current requirements established through CCDF regulations in 1998, which required a grace period in which children can receive services while families take the necessary actions to comply with the immunization requirements. (658E(c)(2)(I)(i)(I)) ACF recommends States and Territories consult the definition of homeless in the McKinney-Vento Act (section 725 of subtitle VII-B) as you implement the requirements of this section as that definition is consistent with the required CCDF administrative data reporting requirements.

Effective Date: 09/30/2016

Describe the status of the State/Territory's procedures to enroll and provide outreach to homeless families and establish a grace period for children in foster care, if served, for meeting immunization requirements

☒ Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above by March 1, 2016. Describe the following:

a. Procedures to increase access to CCDF subsidies for homeless children and families, including the grace period to comply with immunization and health and safety requirements

Montana has adopted the use of the McKinney-Vento Act definition for homelessness. The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." A residency exemption will be granted for 90 days while families stabilize their living arrangements. Child Care Resource & Referral agencies assist families to work with their local public health departments and medical providers to obtain immunizations necessary to secure conditional certificates so they can utilize licensed, registered, and certified providers.

b. Procedures to conduct outreach to homeless families to improve access to child care services

Child Care Resource & Referral agencies provide outreach information to places providing services to homeless families such as homeless shelters, and organizations that may work with homeless families such as Offices of Public Assistance, Good

Will/Salvation Army stores, etc.

c. Procedures to provide a grace period to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements to expedite enrollment for children who are in foster care if served by the Lead Agency to improve access to child care services

Child Care Resource & Referral agencies provide ninety [90] calendar day eligibility for child care assistance until employment and living arrangements stabilize for families declaring they are homeless.

- ☐ Not implemented. If not implemented, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

3.3 Protection for Working Parents

3.3.1 Twelve Month Eligibility

The CCDBG Act of 2014 establishes a 12-month eligibility period for CCDF families. States are required to demonstrate in the Plan that no later than September 30, 2016 each child who receives assistance will be considered to meet all eligibility requirements for such assistance and will receive such assistance, for not less than 12 months before the State redetermines the eligibility of the child, regardless of changes in income (as long as income does not exceed the federal threshold of 85% of State median income) or temporary changes in participation in work, training, or education activities. (658E(c)(2)(N)(i) &(ii))

Note that this change means a State may not terminate CCDF assistance during the 12 month period if a family has an increase in income that exceeds the State's income eligibility threshold, but not the federal threshold of 85% SMI.

In addition, this change means the State may not terminate assistance prior to the end of the 12 month period if family experiences a temporary job loss or temporary change in participation in a training or education activity. For example, if a working parent is temporarily absent from employment due to extended medical leave, changes in seasonal work schedule, or a parent enrolled in training or educational program is temporarily not attending class between semesters, the state should not terminate assistance.

Describe the status of the State's establishment of a 12-month eligibility re-determination period for CCDF families.

Effective Date: 10/01/2016

- ☒ Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above by March 1, 2016. List the Lead Agency's policy citation(s) and describe circumstances considered temporary changes in work, education or training that are not subject to termination

List the Lead Agency's policy citation(s) and describe circumstances considered temporary changes in work, education or training that are not subject to termination

12-month eligibility was Montana Administrative Register Notice No. 37-722 and the final adoption of the Child Care Policy Manual was effective 4/9/2016. Families in the Non-TANF

program have eligibility for twelve months, and re-determination of eligibility is conducted annually. There is no check-in during the 12-month eligibility period unless there is a required change of change in address, job loss, or change in child care provider that must be reported. Policy Section 2-7: Redetermination states redetermination is conducted annually.

☐ Not implemented. If not implemented, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's status toward complete implementation for any requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities -What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

3.3.2 State and Territory option to terminate assistance prior to 12 months

The CCDBG Act of 2014 provides States and Territories the option - but does not require them - to terminate assistance prior to re-determination at 12 months if a parent loses employment or if he or she stops attending a job training or education program (i.e., if the parent experiences a

non-temporary change in their status as working, or participating in a training or education program). However, prior to terminating the subsidy, the State/Territory must provide a period of continued child care assistance of at least 3 months to allow parents to engage in job search, resume work, or to attend an education or training program as soon as possible.

(658E(c)(2)(N)(iii)) Nothing in the statute prohibits the State/Territory from starting a new 12-month eligibility and redetermination period if families are eligible at the end of their job search, training or education attendance period.

Note that unless the State allows a minimum 3-month job search period - the State/Territory may not exercise the option to terminate assistance based on a parent's non-temporary job loss or cessation of attendance at a job training or educational program prior to the end of the minimum 12-month eligibility and re-determination period. The statute does not specify any documentation that States/Territories must require parents to submit regarding activities during periods of job search or finding training or education program requirements for this period.

Does the State/Territory terminate assistance prior to 12 months due to a parent's non-temporary loss of work or cessation of attendance at a job training or education program?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Yes, the State/Territory terminates assistance prior to 12 months due to parent's loss of work or cessation of attendance at a job training or education program ONLY.

List the Lead Agency's policy citation(s) and describe the circumstances considered to be non-temporary job, education or training loss and provide the duration allowed for job search or resuming attendance in training or education programs

Grace period [the term Montana applies to child care coverage during job loss circumstances] was increased from 30 calendar days to 90 calendar days as part of Montana Administrative Register Notice No. 37-722, and the final adoption of the Child Care Policy Manual was effective 4/9/2016. Policy Section 6-6: Absent Days & Continuity of Care includes Grace Period.

The Grace Period is granted following the job loss, based on the date the employment change occurred. The household maintains eligibility during the Grace Period.

The following link will take you to the Child Care Policy Manual:

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/DocumentsAndResources.policy-manual>.

☐ No, the State/Territory does not allow this option.

3.3.3 Prevent Disruption of Work

The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a requirement that States and Territories must describe in the Plan the procedures and policies in place to ensure that parents (especially parents in families receiving assistance under TANF) are not required to unduly disrupt their employment, education or job training activities in order to comply with the State/Territory's or designated local entity's requirements for redetermination of eligibility for assistance. (658E(c)(2)(N)(ii)) Examples include implementing re-determination strategies to verify income and employment electronically as opposed to more onerous practices such as asking parents and families to come to the subsidy office for an in-person visit, or aligning eligibility with other early care and education or public benefits programs to collect information centrally. The process by which States and Territories collect eligibility documentation represents a potential barrier to services, particularly when documentation can only be provided in-person during standard work hours. States and Territories can offer a variety of family-friendly mechanisms for submitting documentation for eligibility determinations and/or re-determination.

Effective Date: 10/01/2016

Describe the status of the State/Territory's redetermination procedures and policies to ensure that parents (especially parents receiving TANF) do not have their employment, education or job training unduly disrupted in order to comply with the State/Territory's or designated local entity's requirements for redetermination of eligibility.

☒ Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above by March 1, 2016.

List the Lead Agency's policy citation(s) and describe the policies and procedures for not unduly disrupting employment

[Montana has policies and procedures available to not unduly disrupt the parent's activities in the following ways:](#)

- Changes can be reported to the Child Care Resource and Referral agency in writing such as email, phone call or other type of communication (Child Care Policy Manual, Policy Section 6-5: Change Reporting). The Child Care Resource and Referral agency staff confirm the reported change in writing if it's communicated verbally.
- An online application and phone interviews are available for both an initial application and for annual re-determinations (Child Care Policy Manual, Policy Section 2-1: Application Process).
- The 12-month eligibility period is aligned with the Head Start school year for ease of the parent (Early Childhood Services Bureau Procedure Handbook).
- Child Care Resource and Referral agencies are required to be opened at least one business day of the week after normal business hours (Early Childhood Services Bureau Procedure Handbook) or by appointment to assist parents with meeting

program requirements.

- Any documentation submitted after business hours is date stamped for the previous day to be family friendly (Early Childhood Services Bureau Procedure Handbook).
- Express Eligibility is available to a family on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP] program. This allows information submitted to another agency to be used to speed up the processing of the case and lessen required paperwork for the parent (Child Care Policy Manual, Policy Section 2-1: Application Process).

☐ Not implemented. If not implemented, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

3.4 Family Contribution to Payment

The statute requires Lead Agencies to establish a sliding fee scale that varies based on income and the size of the family to be used in determining each family's contribution (i.e., co-payment) to the cost of child care that is not a barrier to families receiving CCDF. (658E(c)(5) In addition to income and size of the family, the Lead Agency may use other factors when determining family contributions/co-payments. The sliding fee scale is subject to review by ACF as part of ongoing monitoring efforts to CCDBG compliance.

3.4.1 Provide the CCDF copayments in the chart below according to family size.

Effective Date: 07/01/2016

☐ Note - If the sliding fee scale is not statewide, check here
and describe how many jurisdictions set their own sliding fee scale

Fill in the chart based on the most populous area of the State.

Family Size	(a) Lowest "Entry" Income Level Where Copayment First Applied	(b) What is the monthly copayment for a family of this size upon initial entry into CCDF?	(c) What is the percent of income for (b)?	(d) Maximum Highest "Entry" Income Level Before No Longer Eligible	(e) What is the monthly copayment for a family of this size upon initial entry into CCDF?	(f) What is the percent of income for (e)?
1	0	0	N/A	0	0	0
2	0	10	N/A	2003	280	14
3	0	10	N/A	2520	353	14
4	0	10	N/A	3038	425	14
5	0	10	N/A	3555	498	14

a) What is the effective date of the sliding fee scale(s)? 07/01/2016

b) Provide the link to the sliding fee scale

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/hcsd/documents/ChildCare/documentsandresources/slidingfeescale.pdf>

**3.4.2 How will the family's contribution be calculated and to whom will it be applied?
Check all that the Lead Agency has chosen to use.**

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Fee as dollar amount and

☐ Fee is per child with the same fee for each child

☐ Fee is per child and discounted fee for two or more children

☐ Fee is per child up to a maximum per family

☐ No additional fee charged after certain number of children

☒ Fee is per family

☒ Fee as percent of income and

☐ Fee is per child with the same percentage applied for each child

☐ Fee is per child and discounted percentage applied for two or more children

☐ Fee is per child up to a maximum per family

☐ No additional percentage applied charged after certain number of children

☒ Fee is per family

☐ Contribution schedule varies because it is set locally/regionally (as indicated in 1.2.1).

Describe:

☐ Other.

Describe:

3.4.3 Will the Lead Agency use other factors in addition to income and family size to determine each family's copayment? (658E(c)(3)(B))

☐ Yes, and describe those additional factors using the checkboxes below.

☐ Number of hours the child is in care

☐ Lower copayments for higher quality of care as defined by the State/Territory

☐ Other.

Describe other factors.

☒ No.

3.4.4 The Lead Agency may waive contributions/co-payments from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size.

Will the Lead Agency waive family contributions/co-payments?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☐ Yes, the Lead Agency waives family contributions/co-payments for families with income at or below the poverty level for families of the same size.

The poverty level used by the Lead Agency for a family size of 3 is \$

☒ No, the Lead Agency does not waive family contributions/co-payments

3.4.5 How will the Lead Agency ensure the family contribution/co-payment, based on a sliding fee scale, is affordable?

Check all that apply:

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Limits the maximum co-payment per family.

Describe:

Co-payments are set as a percentage of a family's income. A Family, whose income falls below approximately 95.5% of the Federal Poverty Level pays a \$10 monthly co-payment. A family's copayment is increased by a percentage as the family's income increases. At 150% of the Federal Poverty Level, which is the maximum for entry into Montana's Eligibility program, a family's co-payment is 14% of income. For those families that are in the

Graduated phase out of the Eligibility program which is capped at 200% of Federal Poverty Level, copayments range increase up to a maximum of 25% of income. "Affordable Child Care" means the total parental (caretaker, relative, or person acting in loco parentis) co-payment and 'above and beyond' obligation does not exceed 25% of gross family income.

- ☐ Limits combined amount of copayment for all children to a percentage of family income. List the percentage of the copayment limit.

Describe:

- ☒ Minimizes the abrupt termination of assistance before a family can afford the full cost of care ("the cliff effect") as part of the graduated phase-out of assistance discussed in 3.1.5.

Describe:

For those families that move into the Graduated Phase of the eligibility program, copayments range from 15% to 25% of income.

- ☐ Does not allow providers to charge families the difference between the maximum payment rate (addressed in section 4) and their private pay rate in addition to the copayment they are paying.

Describe:

- ☐ Covers all fees (such as registration, supplies, field trips) to minimize the additional fees charged to the families by the provider.

Describe:

- ☐ Other.

Describe:

4 Ensure Equal Access to High Quality Child Care for Low-Income Children

The 2014 reauthorization of the CCDBG Act is designed to help States and Territories advance improvements to the quality of child care in order to promote the healthy social-emotional, cognitive and physical development of participating children. Ensuring that low-income and

vulnerable children can access high-quality care (and remain enrolled to school entry and beyond) is an equally important purpose of CCDBG. Payment levels and policies have a major impact on access.

The CCDBG Act of 2014 revises the requirement for a market rate survey (MRS) so that: 1) it must be statistically valid and reliable; and (2) it must reflect variations in the cost of child care services by geographic area, type of provider, and age of child. Also, a State/Territory may develop and conduct an alternative methodology for setting payment rates, such as a cost estimation model, to take into account the cost of meeting quality requirements.

To provide stability of funding and encourage more child care providers to participate in the subsidy program, the State/Territory's payment practices for CCDF child care providers must reflect generally accepted payment practices of non-CCDF child care providers in the State/Territory, such as paying for supplies, field trips, registration fees. In addition, to the extent practicable, the State/Territory must implement enrollment and eligibility policies that support the fixed costs of providing child care services by delinking provider payments from a child's occasional absence due to holidays or unforeseen circumstances such as illness or closures due to emergency.

The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a provision that the State/Territory must also develop and implement strategies to increase the supply and improve the quality of child care services for: (1) children in underserved areas; (2) infants and toddlers; (3) children with disabilities (the CCDBG Act of 2014 added a new definition of child with disability (658(P)(3)); and (4) children who receive care during non-traditional hours. With respect to investments to increase access to programs providing high-quality child care and development services, the State/Territory must give priority to children of families in areas that have significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment and that do not have such programs. (658 E(c)(2)(M))

4.1 Parental Choice In Relation to Certificates, Grants or Contracts

The parent(s) of each eligible child who receive(s) or is offered financial assistance for child care services has the option of either enrolling such child with a provider that has a grant or contract for the provision of service or receiving a child care certificate. (658E(c)(2)(A)) This did not change under the CCDBG Act of 2014.

4.1.1 Describe how the parent of each eligible child is advised that the Lead Agency offers the option of selecting a provider that has a grant or contract or receiving a child care certificate (658E(c)(2)(A)(i), 658P(2))

Currently, the lead agency offers a child care certificate through the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship to parents. As part of the eligibility process, an authorization of services and certification plan are created. The certification plan is a child care certificate, indicating the number of care hours a child has been approved for.

The lead agency is currently piloting a slot care program through the QRIS system, the STARS to Quality program. And as such, the choice is not given to parents statewide. Plans are underway to implement slots for families enrolled in child care facilities participating in Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships.

4.1.2 Describe how the parent is informed of the option to choose from a variety of child care categories - such as private, not-for-profit, faith-based providers (if using a certificate), centers, family child care homes, or in-home providers (658E(c)(2)(A)(i), 658P(2), 658Q))

- ☐ Certificate form provides information about the choice of providers, including high quality providers
- ☐ Certificate is not linked to a specific provider so parents can choose provider of choice
- ☒ Consumer education materials on choosing child care
- ☒ Referral to child care resource and referral agencies
- ☒ Co-located resource and referral in eligibility offices
- ☒ Verbal communication at the time of application
- ☐ Community outreach, workshops or other in-person activities
- ☐ Other.

Describe

4.1.3 Child Care Services Available through Grants or Contracts

a) In addition to offering certificates, does the Lead Agency provide child care services through grants or contracts for child care slots? (658A(b)(1) **Note:** Do not check "yes" if every provider is simply required to sign an agreement in order to be paid in the certificate program.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Yes. If yes, **describe**

the type(s) of child care services available through grants or contracts

Currently, the lead agency has a pilot program for child care slots through the STARS to Quality program. There were 39 slots available to 12 programs in the pilot program. Plans are underway to implement slots for families enrolled in child care facilities participating in Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships.

the entities who receive contracts (e.g., shared services alliances, child care resource and referral agencies, family child care networks, community based agencies, child care providers, etc.)

Child care providers participating in the STARS to Quality program.

the process for accessing grants or contracts

The child care providers must be at a STAR Level of 3 or higher and located in one of four high-needs areas identified by the STARS to Quality Program needs assessment. The family signs an agreement with the provider about the conditions of the slot.

the range of providers available through grants or contracts

Child care providers must be licensed or registered to participate.

how rates for contracted slots are set for grants and contracts

Payments are set at a full-time monthly rate, based on the current daily payment rate, and will include a bonus percentage, based on STAR level. Slot Rates are not posted as this is in a pilot program. Current payment rates can be found on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website,

how the State/Territory determines which entities to contract with for increasing supply and/or improving quality

The child care providers must be participants in the STARS to Quality program.

if contracts are offered statewide and/or locally:

The contracts are offered in only four high-needs areas.

☐ No. If no, skip to 4.1.4.

b) Will the Lead Agency use grants or contracts for child care services to achieve any of the following (check all that apply):

☒ Increase the supply of specific types of care with grants or contracts for:

- ☐ Programs to serve children with disabilities
- ☐ Programs to serve infants and toddlers
- ☐ Programs to serve school-age children
- ☐ Programs to serve children needing non-traditional hour care
- ☐ Programs to serve homeless children
- ☒ Programs to serve children in underserved areas
- ☐ Programs that serve children with diverse linguistic or cultural backgrounds
- ☐ Programs that serve specific geographic areas
 - ☐ Urban
 - ☐ Rural
- ☐ Other.

Describe:

☒ Improve the quality of child care programs with grants or contracts for:

- ☐ Programs providing comprehensive services, such as integrated child care in Head Start, Early Head Start, summer or other programs
- ☒ Programs meeting higher quality standards, such as higher rated QRIS programs, accreditation or state pre-k programs that meet higher quality standards
- ☐ Programs that provide financial incentives to teaching staff linked to higher education and qualifications link increased education requirements to higher compensation
- ☐ Programs to serve children with disabilities or special needs
- ☐ Programs to serve infants and toddlers
- ☐ Programs to serve school-age children
- ☐ Programs to serve children needing non-traditional hour care
- ☐ Programs to serve homeless children
- ☒ Programs to serve children in underserved areas

- ☐ Programs that serve children with diverse linguistic or cultural backgrounds
- ☐ Programs that serve specific geographic areas
 - ☐ Urban
 - ☐ Rural
- ☐ Other.

Describe:

4.1.4 The Lead Agency certifies policies and procedures are in place that afford parents unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds.

(658E(c)(2)(B)) This requirement did not change under the CCDBG Act of 2014. Describe the policies and procedures for unlimited access

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe the policies and procedures for unlimited access

ARM 37.95.115 requires the licensee or registrant to allow custodial and non-custodial parental access as well as access by legal guardians (to the facility) at any time during which child care services are provided, unless there is a current court order preventing parent-child contact. In the Child Care Policy Manual, in Policy Section 1-8 Provider Eligibility, the provider must allow unlimited parental access to the parent's children and to the child care facility during normal hours of the facility's operation, whenever the children are in the provider's care.

4.1.5 The Lead Agency must allow for in-home care (i.e., care provided in the child's own home) but may limit its use. Will the Lead Agency limit the use of in-home care in any way?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- ☒ Yes. If checked, what limits will the Lead Agency set on the use of in-home care?
Check all that apply.

☐ Restricted based on minimum number of children in the care of the provider to meet minimum wage law or Fair Labor Standards Act

Describe:

☒ Restricted based on provider meeting a minimum age requirement

Describe:

The current requirements state the individual must be at least 18 years old.

☒ Restricted based on hours of care (certain number of hours, non-traditional work hours)

Describe:

The current requirements limit care to providers who are providing care for weekend and extended care.

☐ Restricted to care by relatives

Describe:

☒ Restricted to care for children with special needs or medical condition

Describe:

The current requirements limit care to providers who are providing care for special circumstances.

☐ Restricted to in-home providers that meet some basic health and safety requirements

Describe:

☒ Other

Describe:

- The current requirements limit care to providers who are providing care for teen parents.
- Legally Certified Providers (LCPs) may provide care to only one family or are limited to no more than 2 children from separate families. If the number of children exceeds this number, the facility would be required to become licensed as a child care provider per MCA 52-2-721.

☐ No.

4.2 Assessing Market Rates and Child Care Costs

The new law revises the requirement for a market rate survey (MRS) so that: (1) it must be statistically valid and reliable; and (2) it must reflect variations in the cost of child care services by geographic area, type of provider, and age of child (658E(c)(4)(B)). A State/Territory has the option to develop and use a statistically valid and reliable alternative methodology for setting payment rates, such as a cost estimation model. Any payment rates established using an alternative methodology or market rate survey must be reviewed and approved by ACF as part of the CCDF Plan review process. Because the alternative methodology is a new basis for setting payment rates, we highly recommend any State or Territory considering an alternative methodology to submit a description of its proposed approach to the ACF Regional Office in advance of the Plan submittal in order to avoid delays with Plan approval. (see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/ccdf-reauthorization-faq>).

The MRS or alternative methodology must be developed and conducted no earlier than two years before the date of submission of the Plan (instead of two years before the effective date of the Plan, as previously required for the MRS).

The State must consult with the State Advisory Council, local child care program administrators, local child care resource and referral agencies, and other appropriate entities prior to developing and conducting the MRS or alternative methodology.

The State must prepare a detailed report containing the results of the MRS or alternative methodology. The State must make the report with these results widely available no later than 30 days after completion of the MRS or alternative methodology, including by posting the results on the Internet.

The State must set CCDF subsidy payment rates in accordance with the results of the current MRS or alternative methodology. When setting payment rates, the State must take into consideration the cost of providing higher quality child care services than were provided prior to November 2014 (e.g., tiered reimbursement or other methods) and without, **to the extent practicable**, reducing the number of families receiving CCDF relative to the number served as of November 2014. In taking the cost of providing quality into consideration, it is important to consider such key factors as what it takes to support increased stability and reduced provider turnover when setting payment rates.

4.2.1 Developing and Conducting a Market Rate Survey (MRS) and/or an Alternative Methodology. Did the State/Territory conduct a statistically and valid and reliable MRS, alternative methodology or both between July 1, 2013 and March 1, 2016?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ MRS

☐ Alternative Methodology.

Describe:

☐ Both.

Describe:

☐ Other.

Describe:

4.2.2 Describe how the State consulted with the State Advisory Council (SAC) or other state- or state-designated cross-agency body if there is no SAC, local child care program administrators, local child care resource and referral agencies, and other appropriate entities which could include worker organizations prior to developing and conducting the MRS or alternative methodology.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

Market rate survey information was presented to providers at during a Director Symposium and a STARS to Quality Conference, affording providers an opportunity to supply feedback and input into the survey. Market rate survey information was also presented to The Montana Child Care Resource and Referral Network and Agency Directors and the Montana Best Beginnings Advisory Council allowing for feedback and input.

4.2.3 Describe how the market rate survey or alternative methodology is statistically valid and reliable.

To be considered valid and reliable, the MRS or alternative methodology must represent the child care market, provide complete and current data, use rigorous data collection procedures, reflect geographic variation, and analyze data in a manner that captures other relevant differences. For example, market rate surveys can use administrative data such as child care resource and referral data if they are representative of the market. If an alternative methodology such as cost modeling is used, demonstrate that the methodology used reliable models that estimated the cost of delivering services in center- and home-based settings at each level of quality defined by the State/Territory.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

Montana's rate survey represents the child care market through the inclusion of all registered/licensed family, group, and center providers regardless of whether or not they serve scholarship children in their facility.

Prior to the market rate survey analysis, The Early Childhood Services Bureau (ECSB) mailed a postcard to currently registered or licensed family, group and center child care providers in to request that they update their rates in the NACCRRAware database. Providers were asked contact the Centralized Referral Agency via phone to update their rates or to access a web site where they could also update their rates. When the time frame for providers to submit their rates was over, the CCR&R Centralized Services Provider provided ECSB with a NACCRRAware report, which was used to analyze rates by district, age of child, type of facility, capacity of facility, and frequency of rate, hourly and daily. The NACCRRAware dataset that was used contained rates for 1121 providers, 29% of which had updated their rates in 2013 and was the sample that was used for the 2013 Market Rate. In the more rural areas where there were voids in the data, providers were called in order to acquire rate information.

For statistical analysis Montana uses twelve districts to establish rates in order to facilitate access to care in areas where families and providers experience a higher cost of living. Provider rates are sorted by three categories for statistical analysis: 1) geographic location, 2) child care setting, and 3) age of child. Rates were additionally analyzed based on capacity

and rate frequency of hourly and daily. Additionally all data was compiled into a single statewide data pool for a comparative calculation on a statewide basis by child care setting and age of child. The 75th percentile data was determined using the available scientific functions in Excel. The State is interested in helping families afford quality child care for the same price the public pays.

Rates for family, group, and centers child care facilities were set effective August 1st, 2013 at 102% of the 75th percentile of the 2013 Market Rate Survey. Because there is no "market" for Legally Certified Provider (LCP) or Legally Certified In-home (LCI) care, LCP/LCI rates are set at 75 percent of the corresponding Family Home rates.

The Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship Program balances the need for families to access quality care and the need to serve as many low-income families as possible. While maintaining rates at the 75th percentile to ensure that scholarship families can afford to purchase child care services at most of the programs available in their area, is a top priority for Montana, supplemental state funding was not appropriated during the last legislative session. At this time ECSB has been authorized by Montana legislative action to increase provider rates by 2%. Montana's Current rates, those that were effective January 2016, are set at an average of 95% of the 75th percentile of the 2013 Market Rate Survey.

4.2.4 Describe how the market rate survey reflects variations in the price of child care services by:

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) Geographic area (e.g., statewide or local markets):

Montana evaluates and determines rates based on twelve districts in order to facilitate access to care in areas where families and providers experience a higher cost of living.

b) Type of provider:

Rates are evaluated and determined based on the child care setting of the registered/licensed provider. Rates are set based on the provider being a family, group, or center, in consideration that these provider types have different requirements and necessities.

c) Age of child:

Rates are evaluated and determined based on the age of the child, and is broken into 2 categories: children under 2 years of age and children age 2 and over. Rates for children under 2 years of age are typically set higher than the rate for children age 2 and over in order to help with supply and the higher cost of care for the under 2 age group.

d) Describe any other key variations examined by the market rate survey, such as quality level

Rates are additionally evaluated and determined based on hourly and daily reported rate amounts.

4.2.5 Describe the process used by the State to make the results of the market rate survey widely available to the public.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) Date of completion of the market rate survey or alternative methodology (must be no earlier than July 1, 2013 and no later than March 1, 2016)

07/01/2013

b) Date report containing results were made widely available, no less than 30 days after the completion of the report

07/01/2013

c) How the report containing results was made widely available and provide the link where the report is posted if available

Provider rates that were effective August 1st, 2013 were mailed to providers in July 2013.

4.3 Setting Payment Rates

4.3.1 Provide the base payment rates and percentiles (based on current MRS or alternative methodology) for the following categories. The ages and types of care listed below are meant to provide a snapshot of categories on which rates may be based and are not intended to be comprehensive of all categories that may exist in your State/Territory or reflective of the terms that your State/Territory may use for particular ages. Please use the most populous geographic region (serving highest number of children).

☐ Note - If the payment rates are not set by the State/Territory, check here

Describe how many jurisdictions set their own payment rates

a) Infant (6 months), full-time licensed center care in most populous geographic region

Rate \$ 35.20 per day unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)

Percentile: 75th

b) Infant (6 months), full-time licensed FCC care in most populous geographic region

Rate \$ 28.65 per day unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)

Percentile: 75th

c) Toddler (18 months), full-time licensed center care in most populous geographic region

Rate \$ 35.20 per day unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)

Percentile: 75th

d) Toddler (18 months), full-time licensed FCC care in most populous geographic region

Rate \$ 28.65 per day unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)

Percentile: 75th

e) Preschooler (4 years), full-time licensed center care in the most populous geographic region

Rate \$ 30.56 per day unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)

Percentile: 75th

f) Preschooler (4 years), full-time licensed FCC care in the most populous geographic region

Rate \$ 26.53 per day unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)

Percentile: 75th

g) School-age child (6 years), full-time licensed center care in the most populous geographic region

Rate \$ 30.56 per day unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)

Percentile: 75th

h) School-age child (6 years), full-time licensed FCC care in the most populous geographic region

region

Rate \$ 26.53 per day unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)

Percentile: 75th

i) Describe the calculation/definition of full-time care:

Full-time Child Care means six to ten hours per day and thirty or more hours per week on a regular basis.

j) Provide the effective date of the payment rates : 01/01/2016

k) Provide the link to the payment rates :

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/ChildCareResourceandReferral.aspx>

4.3.2 States and Territories may choose to set base payment rates that differ because they take into consideration such factors as 1) geographic location, 2) age of child, 3) needs of children (special needs, protective services, etc.), 4) non-traditional hours of care, or 5) quality of care.

In other words, base rates for infants may be set at a higher level than for school-age care because the cost of providing infant care tends to be higher than school-age care. In addition to these rates that differ tied to market variations in prices, States and Territories can choose to establish tiered rates or add-ons on top of these variable base rates as a way to increase payment rates for targeted needs (i.e., higher rate for special needs children as both an incentive for providers to serve children with special needs and as a way to cover the higher costs to the provider to provide care for special needs children).

Check which types of tiered payment or rate add-on, if any, the Lead Agency has chosen to implement. In the description of any tiered rates or add-ons, indicate the process and basis used for determining the tiered rates, amount or percentage of the tiered rate/add-on, and indicate if the rates were set based on the MRS or another process.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☐ Tiered rate/rate add-on for non-traditional hours.

Describe:

☒ Tiered rate/rate add-on for children with special needs as defined by the State/Territory.

Describe:

Based on an observational tool, an additional special needs add-on rate is at the

discretion of the lead agency. This additional special needs subsidy is an made available for a child care provider above the provider rate for the district, type of facility, and type of care.

- ☐ Tiered rate/rate add-on for infants and toddlers (do not check if you have a different base rate for infants/toddlers with no separate bonus or add-on).

Describe:

- ☒ Tiered rate/rate add-on for programs meeting higher quality as defined by the State/Territory.

Describe:

Programs participating in Montana's QRIS program receive an additional percentage of reimbursement for scholarship children being served. The percentage of reimbursement depends on the quality level that has been achieved. A facility at a STAR 2 rating receives a 5% reimbursement bonus over the base scholarship payment. A facility at a STAR 3 rating receives a 10% reimbursement bonus over the base scholarship payment. A facility at a STAR 4 rating receives a 15% reimbursement bonus over the base scholarship payment. A facility at a STAR 5 rating receives a 20% reimbursement bonus over the base scholarship payment.

- ☐ Tiered rate/rate add-on for programs serving homeless children.

Describe:

- ☐ Other tiered rate/rate add-on beyond the base rate.

Describe:

- ☐ None.

4.3.3 Describe how the State/Territory set payment rates for child care services in accordance with the results of the most recent market rate survey or alternative methodology

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

Current payment rates are set based on a 2009 Market Rate with a 2% increase in 2013, an additional 2% increase in 2014 and an additional 2% increase in 2016 which was effective

January 1, 2016. The 2% increase in 2013 and 2014 resulted from legislative action. The 2% increase in 2016 was determined in order to offer providers a rate increase until the market rate survey, which has been contracted to Montana State University is completed in June 2016.

4.3.4 In setting payment rates, how did the State/Territory take into consideration the cost of providing higher quality child care services than were provided prior to November 2014 (e.g., tiered payment or other methods) and without, to the extent practicable, reducing the number of families receiving CCDF relative to the number of families served as of November 2014.

For example, providing tiered payment with a sufficient differential to support higher quality, considering the cost of quality using a cost estimation model or other method, or examining the participation rate of high-quality providers in the subsidy system (e.g., using indicators from a quality rating system, accreditation or other state-defined indicators of quality) and adjusting payment rates if necessary.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

1.1.1 The lead agency has increased the number of participants in the STARS to Quality program (Montana's Quality Rating and Improvement System) which supports providers through incentive bonuses. The incentive bonuses are awarded based on STAR level achieved and incrementally increases as the provider advances through the STAR levels. This monetary support based on STAR level achievement allows programs and providers to increase programmatic and staffing quality. The participation rate increased by 100 child care providers in 2014 and was opened up state-wide with no cap on the maximum number of child care providers.

The Market Rate Survey will be completed in June 2016, and at that time the lead agency will consider the cost of providing high quality child care services in setting base payment rates.

4.4 Summary of Facts Used to Determine that Payments Rates Are Sufficient to Ensure Equal Access

The CCDF plan shall provide a summary of data and facts relied on by the State/Territory to certify that payment rates are sufficient to ensure equal access. (658E (c)(4)(A)) Equal access is not limited to a single percentile alone but is inclusive of various metrics or benchmarks that would offer children receiving CCDF access to the same services (type of care, quality of care) as children not receiving CCDF.

4.4.1 What data and facts did the State use to determine equal access (i.e., what is your metric or benchmark of equal access - such as percentile that rates cover or proportion of costs covered)? Check all that apply and describe.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- ☐ Payment rates are set at the 75th percentile or higher of the most recent survey.
Describe:
- ☐ Using tiered rates/differential rates as described in 4.3.3 to increase access for targeted needs.
- ☐ Rates based on data on the cost to the provider of providing care meeting certain standards
Describe:
- ☐ Data on the size of the difference (in terms of dollars) between payment rates and the 75th percentile in the most recent survey, if rates are below the 75th percentile.
Describe:
- ☐ Data on the proportion of children receiving subsidy being served by high-quality providers.
Describe:
- ☐ Data on where children are being served showing access to the full range of providers. .

Describe:

- ☐ Data on how rates set below the 75th percentile allow CCDF families access to the same quality of care as families not receiving CCDF.

Describe:

- ☐ Feedback from parents, including parent survey or parent complaints.

Describe:

- ☒ Other.

Describe:

Current payment rates are set based on a 2009 Market Rate with a 2% increase in 2013, an additional 2% increase in 2014 and an additional 2% increase in 2016 and was effective January 1, 2016. The 2% increase in 2013 and 2014 resulted from legislative action. The 2% increase in 2016 was determined in order to offer support to providers a rate increase until the market rate survey, which has been contracted to Montana State University is completed in June 2016.

4.4.2 Does the State/Territory certify that payment rates are sufficient to ensure equal access either based on the current MRS or alternative methodology?

Effective Date: 09/30/2017

Does the State/Territory certify that payment rates are sufficient to ensure equal access either based on the current MRS or alternative methodology?

- ☐ Yes. The State/Territory certifies that payment rates are sufficient to ensure equal access by March 1, 2016.

Provide the State/Territory definition of how its payment rates are sufficient to ensure equal access

- ☒ No. If no, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and

descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016) [09/30/2017](#)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other) [Partially implemented](#)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

[Contract with Montana State University has been secured and the survey process has begun.](#)

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented [payment rates are sufficient to ensure equal access either based on the current MRS or alternative methodology](#)

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

[The results of the current market rate survey that is being conducted will help the state to determine new rates. These new rates may initially be set at the 75th percentile, in order to increase provider reimbursements for child care, while the state evaluates alternative payment options. Currently the state sets rates based on Age, Child Care Region and on an hourly or daily bases. All of these rates setting payment practices will be looked at.](#)

[The State currently pays two different rates for Infants ages 0 - 2 and children above 2. This will be evaluated possibly adding changing the age range for the current rates or adding additional age ranges. Currently, the state sets rates based on the region the child care facility is located. These alternatives may be to set rates based on areas with similar geographical and economic characteristics. Additionally, this survey may change how the state pays, possibly changing from hourly and daily to weekly or monthly.](#)

Projected start date for each activity: [10/01/2015](#)

Projected end date for each activity: [09/30/2017](#)

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity [Early Childhood Services Bureau](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

The State of Montana has contracted with Montana State University to conduct a Market Rate survey that is statistically valid and reliable.

4.5 Payment Practices and Timeliness of Payments

The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a provision that requires States and Territories to describe in the Plan how the State/Territory's payment practices for CCDF child care providers reflect generally accepted payment practices of non-CCDF child care providers in the State/Territory - so as to provide stability of funding and encourage more child care providers to participate in the subsidy program. To the extent practicable, the State/Territory must implement enrollment and eligibility policies that support the fixed costs of providing child care services by delinking provider payments from a child's occasional absences due to holidays or unforeseen circumstances such as illness. (658E(c)(2)(S))

4.5.1 Describe the status of State/Territory's payment practices for CCDF child care providers that reflect generally accepted payment practices of non-CCDF child care providers in the State/Territory

Effective Date: 10/01/2016

- ☒ Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above by March 1, 2016. Describe using 4.5.2 through 4.5.3 below.
- ☐ Not implemented. If not implemented, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

4.5.2 Describe how the payment practices to child care providers who serve CCDF-assisted children reflect generally accepted payment practices of other child care providers in the State/Territory to ensure stability of funding to encourage more child care providers to serve children who receive CCDF assistance. Check all that apply and describe.

The Lead Agency

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☐ Pays prospectively prior to the delivery of services.

Describe:

☒ Pays within no more than 21 days of billing for services.

Describe:

CCUBS processes invoices and requests payment through AWACS at 3:30 p.m. on the following days:

- 5th business day of the month; 80% of Payments are processed by this first payment run
- Subsequent Tuesdays; and
- Second to the last business day of the month

Warrants (payments) are issued and mailed the morning after the day of the batch process and are delivered in an automated mailer format with a brief explanation. Direct

Deposit payments are generated the morning after a batch process, are sent to the Automated Clearing House [ACH], and issued to the recipient's bank the 2nd day after the batch process. A payment advice is e-mailed to confirm each Direct Deposit. Later in the month, providers receive a detailed Statement of Remittance (SOR). Parents receive a similar statement for their family called an Explanation of Benefits (EOB).

Providers have 60 days to submit invoices; invoices are batch processed for cost effectiveness. Child care providers serving several families generally receive one combined payment.

- ☐ Supports fixed costs of providing child care services by delinking provider payments from a child's occasional absences by paying based on enrollment instead of attendance.
Describe including the State/Territory's definition of occasional absences
- ☐ Supports fixed costs of providing child care services by delinking provider payments from a child's occasional absences by providing full payment if a child attends at least a certain percent of authorized time. Specify percent and describe
Specify percent and describe
- ☐ Supports fixed costs of providing child care services by delinking provider payments from a child's occasional absences by providing full payment if a child is absent for a certain number of days in a month.
Specify the number of absence days allowed and paid for and describe
- ☐ Pays on a full-time or part-time basis (rather than smaller increments such as hourly)
Describe:
- ☐ Pays for standard and customary fees that the provider charges private-paying parents (e.g., registration fees, deposits, supplies, field trips, etc.)
Describe:
- ☒ Provides prompt notice to providers regarding any changes to the family's eligibility status that may impact payment
Describe:
Child care provider are notified by a letter with at least a 15 calendar day notice.
Notifications are generated by the Child Under the Big Sky [CCUBS] database.

- ☒ Has a timely appeal and resolution process for payment inaccuracies and disputes.

Describe:

A weekly error log is created by the Child Care Under the Big Sky [CCUBS] database for any payments that should have been made but were unable to go to the intended party for the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship. The error log is emailed to Early Childhood Services Bureau, and follow-up is made on any payments that cannot be made from the CCUBS database.

- ☒ Other.

Describe:

The lead agency provides 70 Certified Enrollment Hours for a full-time child. A child care provider must notify the Child Care Resource & Referral agency if the child is gone for more than five days.

- ☒ For those options not checked above, explain why these options are not generally accepted payment practices in your State/Territory.

Montana is currently reviewing all payment practices are under review:

1. Providers attending the STARS conference provided some input around payment practices including the frequency of SORs;
2. Plans are underway to revise the release of Statements of Remittance [SOR] to a weekly frequency rather than once/month;
3. Policies around payments are reviewed by the public, the BBAC, and the list of interested parties as part of its revisions and incorporation in the Administrative Rules of Montana which allows several opportunities for input on proposed changes/direction around payments;
4. Another option under consideration includes utilizing the Child Care Under the Big Sky database to allow providers using online invoicing to enter actual sign in/sign out times and the database will compute the payment.

4.5.3 Check and describe the strategies the State/Territory will use to ensure the timeliness of payments.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- ☒ Policy on length of time for making payments.

Describe length of time:

Child care providers have 60 calendar days to submit claims for services.

☐ Track and monitor the payment process

Describe:

☒ Use of electronic tools (e.g., automated billing, direct deposit, etc.)

Describe:

Direct deposit and online invoicing are available to all child care providers for the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship program.

☐ Other.

Describe:

4.6 Supply Building Strategies to Meet the Needs of Certain Populations

The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a provision that the State/Territory will develop and implement strategies to increase the supply and improve the quality of child care services for children in underserved areas, infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children who receive care during non-traditional hours. (658 E(c)(2)(M))

4.6.1 Has the State/Territory conducted data analysis of existing and growing supply needs?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Yes.

Describe data sources

Best Beginnings Advisory Council Early Childhood Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan, 2013

☐ No.

If no, how does the State/Territory determine most critical supply needs?

4.6.2 Describe what method(s) is used to increase supply and improve quality for:

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) Infants and toddlers (check all that apply)

- ☐ Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3)
- ☐ Family child care networks
- ☐ Start-up funding
- ☐ Technical assistance support
- ☐ Recruitment of providers
- ☒ Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.4.1)
- ☒ Other.

Describe

[The Professional Development Incentive Award \[PDIA\] is available for the completion of the Infant Toddler course.](#)

b) Children with disabilities (check all that apply)

- ☐ Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3)
- ☐ Family child care networks
- ☐ Start-up funding
- ☐ Technical assistance support
- ☐ Recruitment of providers
- ☒ Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.4.1)
- ☐ Other.

Describe

c) Children who receive care during non-traditional hours (check all that apply)

- ☐ Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3)
- ☐ Family child care networks
- ☐ Start-up funding

- ☐ Technical assistance support
- ☐ Recruitment of providers
- ☐ Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.4.1)
- ☐ Other.

Describe

d) Homeless children (check all that apply)

- ☐ Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3)
- ☐ Family child care networks
- ☐ Start-up funding
- ☐ Technical assistance support
- ☐ Recruitment of providers
- ☐ Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.4.1)
- ☐ Other.

Describe

4.6.3 The CCDBG Act of 2014 requires States to describe the procedures and process it uses, in terms of the investments made to increase access to programs providing high quality child care and development services, to give priority for those investments to children in families in areas that have significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment and that do not have such high-quality programs. (658E(c)(2)(Q))

Effective Date: 09/30/2016

Describe the status of State/Territory's process and procedures to give priority for investments to children and families from areas with high concentrations of poverty and unemployment that do not have high-quality programs.

- ☒ Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above.

Describe

Montana has adopted a slot care pilot working with two Early Head Start Grantees to guarantee a minimum monthly payment to participating providers. The additional funds

are tied to attendance at 85% or higher and involve only providers currently identified as STAR 1 or higher on Montana's STARS to Quality QRIS system. Providers enter into agreements with parents for a child enrolled in a slot. Providers may place a new child in a vacated slot.

- ☐ Not implemented. If not implemented, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's status toward complete implementation for any requirement(s) not fully implemented (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

5 Establish Standards and Monitoring Processes to Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings

The CCDBG Act of 2014 makes child care safer by defining minimum health and safety requirements for child care providers. This includes both the standards that must be established and the pre-service/orientation and ongoing minimum training required. States and Territories must also explain why exemptions to any of the licensing standards do not endanger the health and safety of CCDF children in license-exempt care. States and Territories are required to have standards for CCDF providers regarding group size limits and appropriate child-to-provider ratios based on the age of children in child care.

Pre-licensure and annual unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF providers and annual inspections of license-exempt CCDF providers are now required. The CCDBG Act of 2014 requires States and Territories to establish qualifications and training for licensing inspectors and appropriate inspector-to-provider ratios. It also requires States and Territories to conduct criminal background checks for all child care staff members, including staff members who don't care directly for children but have unsupervised access to children and lists specific disqualifying crimes. States and Territories must certify that all child care providers comply with child abuse reporting requirements of Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), mandatory reporting of known and suspected instances of child abuse and neglect).

5.1 Licensing Requirements and Standards

Each State is required to certify it has in effect licensing requirements applicable to all child care services provided within the State (not restricted to providers receiving CCDF), and to provide a detailed description of such requirements and how such requirements are effectively enforced.
(658E(c)(2)(I)(i))

5.1.1 The State/Territory certifies that it has licensing requirements applicable to child care services provided within the State.

(658(c)(2)(F)) This requirement did not change under the CCDBG Act of 2014. List the categories of care that your State/Territory licenses and provide your definition of each licensed category of care

List the categories of care that your State/Territory licenses and provide your definition of each licensed category of care

Child care center is an out-of-home place in which child care is provided to 13 or more children on a regular basis.

Family child care home means a private residence in which child care is provided to three to six children on a regular basis. In addition to the previous definitional language found at 52-2-703, MCA, the term also means, a child care facility providing care to no more than three children under two years of age unless care is provided exclusively for children under age two. For facilities providing care exclusively for children under age two, family child care home means a place in which supplemental parental care is provided for up to four children under the age two. No other children shall be in attendance.

Group child care home is a private residence or other structure in which child care is provided to seven to 12 children on a regular basis. In addition to the previous definitional language found at 52-2-703, MCA, the term also means a child care facility providing care to seven to 12 children with no more than six children under two years of age, unless care is provided exclusively for children under age two. For facilities providing exclusively for children under age two, group child care home means a place in which supplemental parental care is provided for up to eight children under age two. No other children shall be in attendance.

5.1.2 Does your State/Territory exempt any child care providers from its licensing requirements?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Yes.

Describe which types of providers that can receive CCDF are exempt from licensing and how such exemptions do not endanger children who receive CCDF services from license-exempt providers

Currently Legally Certified Providers (LCP) are exempt from licensing. Legally Certified Providers are family members, friends, or neighbors who provide child care. A Legally Certified Provider is a provider certification category that is used for state payment

purposes only. LCP providers are generally matched to families on a one-to-one basis and provide care in their home or in the home of the parent.

The approval criterion, which is specific to background checks for this provider type, is more stringent. By September 30, 2016, health and safety requirements will be in place for this provider type. Relative care will be license-exempt.

☐ No.

5.1.3 Describe the status of the State/Territory's development and implementation of child care standards for providers receiving CCDF that address appropriate ratios between the number of children and the number of providers and group size, in terms of the age of the children for each type of setting. (658E(c)(2)(H))

Effective Date: 09/30/2017

☐ Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above. Describe using 5.1.4 and 5.1.5 below.

☒ Not implemented. If not implemented, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016) **09/30/2017**

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other) **Partially implemented**

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

All facility types have requirements for ratios. Group sizes for family and group child care facilities are currently implemented.

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented **child care standards for providers receiving CCDF that address appropriate ratios between the number of children and the number of providers and group size, in terms of the age of the children for each type of setting.**

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Group size for centers is being researched. The department will be working with its partners to develop parameters that will meet the federal requirements as well as meet the unique needs of our providers. Once determined, this change will require an administrative rule change. The rule will be drafted and internally reviewed between February and March. Once it is complete, it will be filed with the Secretary of State's Office and will follow the formal Montana Administrative Procedure Act process. This process involves noticing the public of the proposed amendments, and official comment period, formal public hearing followed by the department's response to the public comment. Once all of this is complete, adoption of the rule can commence.

Projected start date for each activity: 02/01/2016

Projected end date for each activity: 09/30/2017

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity [Child Care Licensing Program](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

[Early Childhood Services Bureau, Office of Legal Affairs, Best Beginnings Advisory Council work group on group size.](#)

5.1.4 Describe how the State/Territory child care standards for providers receiving CCDF address appropriate ratios between the number of children and the number of providers and group size, in terms of the age of the children for each type of setting. (658E(c)(2)(H))

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) Licensed Center-Based Care

1. Infant

- State/Territory age definition:

0-18 months

- Ratio:

4:1 (this ratio goes through 24 months)

- Group Size:

N/A

2. Toddler

- State/Territory age definition:

19-36 months

- Ratio:

8:1 (this ratio is used for children 2-3 years of age)

- Group Size:

N/A

3. Preschool:

- State/Territory age definition:

36 months-5 years

- Ratio:

10:1 (this ratio is used for children 4-5 years of age)

- Group Size:

N/A

4. School-Age

- State/Territory age definition:

6-12 years

- Ratio:

14:1

- Group Size:

N/A

5. If any of the responses above are different for exempt child care centers, describe:

N/A

6. Describe, if applicable, ratios and group sizes for centers with mixed age groups.

If age groups are mixed, the lowest ratio of the youngest child must be met. The regulations do not allow for children under 19 months of age to be mixed with children over 2 years of age.

b) Licensed Group Child Care Homes:

1. Infant

- State/Territory age definition:

Definition is 0-18 months but number of children is based on children 0-24 months.

- Ratio:

There shall be no more than six children under the age of two in a group child care home, unless care is provided exclusively for children under the age of two. A group child care facility that cares exclusively for children under the age of two must have no more than four children present unless there are two caregivers.

- Group Size:

No more than 6 children under age 2

2. Toddler

- State/Territory age definition:

19 months-36 months

- Ratio:

12:2 maximum. A Group Home can provide care to seven to 12 children with no more than six children under two years of age, unless care is provided exclusively for children under age two. For facilities providing exclusively for children under age two,

group child care home means a place in which supplemental parental care is provided for up to eight children under age two.

- Group Size:

No more than 12 children. Must have 2 caregivers where there are more than 7 children in care.

3. Preschool:

- State/Territory age definition:

36 months-5 years

- Ratio:

12:2 maximum. A Group Home can provide care to seven to 12 children with no more than six children under two years of age, unless care is provided exclusively for children under age two. For facilities providing exclusively for children under age two, group child care home means a place in which supplemental parental care is provided for up to eight children under age two.

- Group Size:

No more than 12 children. Must have 2 caregivers where there are more than 7 children in care.

4. School-Age

- State/Territory age definition:

6-12 years

- Ratio:

12:2 maximum. A Group Home can provide care to seven to 12 children with no more than six children under two years of age, unless care is provided exclusively for children under age two. For facilities providing exclusively for children under age two, group child care home means a place in which supplemental parental care is provided for up to eight children under age two.

- Group Size:

No more than 12 children. Must have 2 caregivers when there are more than 7 children in care.

5. Describe the maximum number of children that are allowed in the home at any one time, if the State/Territory requires related children to be included in the child-to-provider ratio or group size, or the limits on infants and toddlers or additional school-age children that are allowed for part of the day

12:2 maximum. A Group Home can provide care to seven to 12 children with no more than six children under two years of age, unless care is provided exclusively for children under age two. For facilities providing exclusively for children under age two, group day care home means a place in which supplemental parental care is provided for up to eight children under age two. The provider's own children six years of age or older are not counted in the ratio.

6. If any of the responses above are different for exempt group child care homes, describe

Montana does not have exempt group child care homes.

☐ N/A. State/Territory does not have group child care homes.

c) Licensed Family Child Care:

1. Describe the ratios, group size, the threshold for when licensing is required, maximum number of children that are allowed in the home at any one time, if the State/Territory requires related children to be included in the Child-to-Provider ratio or group size, or the limits on infants and toddlers or additional school-age children that are allowed for part of the day.

Describe the ratios:

A Family Home can provide care to 6 children with no more than 3 children under two years of age, unless care is provided exclusively for children under age two. For facilities providing exclusively for children under age two, a family home can provide care for up to 4 children under age two.

Describe the group size:

No more than 6 children.

Describe the threshold for when licensing is required:

3 children on a regular basis.

Describe the maximum number of children that are allowed in the home at any one time:

6

Describe if the State/Territory requires related children to be included in the Child-to-Provider ratio or group size:

The provider's children age 6 and over do not count in the ratio.

Describe the limits on infants and toddlers or additional school-age children that are allowed for part of the day:

No more than 3 children under age 2.

2. If any of the responses above are different for exempt family child care home providers, describe

N/A

d) Any other eligible CCDF provider categories:

Describe the ratios, group size, the threshold for when licensing is required, maximum number of children that are allowed in the home at any one time, if the State/Territory requires related children to be included in the Child-to-Provider ratio or group size, or the limits on infants and toddlers or additional school-age children that are allowed for part of the day.

Describe the ratios:

Legally Certified Providers (LCP's) may provide care to only one family or are limited to no more than 2 children from separate families.

Describe group size:

Legally Certified Providers (LCP's) may provide care to only one family or are limited to no more than 2 children from separate families.

Describe the threshold for when licensing is required:

Legally Certified Providers (LCP's) may provide care to only one family or are limited to no more than 2 children from separate families.

Describe maximum number of children that are allowed in the home at any one time:

Legally Certified Providers (LCP's) may provide care to only one family or are limited to no more than 2 children from separate families.

Describe if the State/Territory requires related children to be included in the Child-to-Provider ratio or group size:

Legally Certified Providers (LCP's) may provide care to only one family or are limited to no more than 2 children from separate families.

Describe the limits on infants and toddlers or additional school-age children that are allowed for part of the day:

N/A

5.1.5 Describe how the State/Territory child care standards address required qualifications for providers appropriate to each type of setting, including the minimum age allowed, minimum education level, any specific content required related to the age of children. (658E(c)(2)(H))

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) Licensed Center-Based Care:

1. Infant lead teacher

Bachelor of Arts or an associate degree in education or a related field; child development associate credential. In lieu of educational requirements, two years of experience in a licensed or registered facility would also qualify an individual as a primary caregiver. Must be 18 years old. A preliminary decision has been made to change the role type for primary caregiver to a teacher. This change will need to go through the administrative rule change process.

and assistant teacher qualifications:

An aide does not need to have any experience but they must be supervised by a primary caregiver or the director. Must be 16 years old. A preliminary decision has been made to change the role type for an aide to assistant teacher. This change will need to go through the administrative rule change process.

2. Toddler lead teacher

Bachelor of Arts or an associate degree in education or a related field; child development associate credential. In lieu of educational requirements, two years of experience in a licensed or registered facility would also qualify an individual as a primary caregiver. Must be 18 years old. A preliminary decision has been made to change the role type for primary caregiver to a teacher. This change will need to go through the administrative rule change process.

and assistant teacher qualifications:

An aide does not need to have any experience but they must be supervised by a primary

caregiver or the director. Must be 16 years old. A preliminary decision has been made to change the role type for an aide to assistant teacher. This change will need to go through the administrative rule change process.

3. Preschool lead teacher

Bachelor of Arts or an associate degree in education or a related field; child development associate credential. In lieu of educational requirements, two years of experience in a licensed or registered facility would also qualify an individual as a primary caregiver.

Must be 18 years old. A preliminary decision has been made to change the role type for primary caregiver to a teacher. This change will need to go through the administrative rule change process.

and assistant teacher qualifications:

An aide does not need to have any experience but they must be supervised by a primary caregiver or the director. Must be 16 years old. A preliminary decision has been made to change the role type for an aide to assistant teacher. This change will need to go through the administrative rule change process. A preliminary decision has been made to change the role type for primary caregiver to a teacher. This change will need to go through the administrative rule change process.

4. School-Age lead teacher

Bachelor of Arts or an associate degree in education or a related field; child development associate credential. In lieu of educational requirements, two years of experience in a licensed or registered facility would also qualify an individual as a primary caregiver.

Must be 18 years old.

and assistant teacher qualifications:

An aide does not need to have any experience but they must be supervised by a primary caregiver or the director. Must be 16 years old. A preliminary decision has been made to change the role type for an aide to assistant teacher. This change will need to go through the administrative rule change process.

5. Director qualifications:

Bachelor's degree in a related field. In addition to a CDA/Bachelor's Degree, the individual must also have 1 year experience working in a licensed or registered facility. Three years of experience in a licensed or registered facility would also qualify an individual as a director. Must be 18 years old.

b) Licensed Group Child Care Homes:

1. Infant lead teacher

Must be 18 years of age and have CPR/FA
and assistant qualifications:

Must be 18 years of age and have CPR/FA

2. Toddler lead teacher

Must be 18 years of age and have CPR/FA
and assistant qualifications:

Must be 18 years of age and have CPR/FA

3. Preschool lead teacher

Must be 18 years of age and have CPR/FA
and assistant qualifications:

Must be 18 years of age and have CPR/FA

4. School-Age lead teacher

Must be 18 years of age and have CPR/FA
and assistant qualifications:

Must be 18 years of age and have CPR/FA



N/A. State/Territory does not have group child care homes.

c) Licensed Family Child Care home provider qualifications

Must be 18 years old. Must attend orientation and be certified in CPR and First Aid.

d) Other eligible providers qualifications:

Must be 18 years old. Completion of orientation.

5.1.6 The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a new provision specifying that States and Territories must 1) establish health and safety requirements for providers serving children receiving CCDF assistance relating to matters included in the topics listed below, and 2) have pre-service or orientation training requirements, appropriate to the provider setting, that address these health and safety topics.

(658E(c)(2)(I)(i)) This requirement is applicable to all child care providers receiving CCDF regardless of licensing status (licensed or license-exempt). The only exception to this requirement is for providers who are caring for their own relatives, as States have the option of exempting relatives from some or all CCDF health and safety requirements. When establishing these requirements, States are encouraged to consider the age of children and type of child care setting to ensure that they are appropriate to the health and safety needs of the children from birth through age 12 and the providers who care for them.

a) The State certifies that it has health and safety requirements for individuals (providers) receiving CCDF in the following areas:

- Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunization)
- Prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and use of safe sleeping practices
- Administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent
- Prevention of and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions
- Building and physical premises safety, including identification of and protection from hazards that can cause bodily injury such as electrical hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic
- Prevention of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma
- Emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies resulting from a natural disaster, or a man-caused event (such as violence at a child care facility), within the meaning of those terms under section 602(a) (1) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5195a(a)(1))
- Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio contaminants
- Precautions in transporting children (if applicable)
- First aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation

☐ Yes. The State/Territory certifies that it has health and safety requirements for CCDF providers in these areas as of March 1, 2016.

Provide a citation and a link if available

☒ No. If no, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016) [09/30/2017](#)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other) [Partially implemented](#)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

The following criteria are currently established within the Administrative Rules of Montana: prevention and control of infectious diseases, prevention of sudden death syndrome and use of safe sleep practices, administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent, building and physical premises safety, including identification of and protection from hazards that can cause bodily injury such as electrical hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic, precautions for transporting children.

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented [Emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies resulting from a natural disaster, or a man-caused event \(such as violence at a child care facility\), within the meaning of those terms under section 602\(a\) \(1\) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act \(42 U.S.C. 5195a\(a\)\(1\)\)](#)

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

The Child Care Licensing Program has drafted the requirements for emergency preparedness and response planning and is working with the agency's legal counsel to begin the rule proposal process.

Projected start date for each activity: [03/01/2016](#)

Projected end date for each activity: [09/30/2017](#)

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity [Child Care Licensing Program](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

[Early Childhood Services Bureau, Office of Legal Affairs](#)

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented [Prevention of and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions](#)

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

The Child Care Licensing program has identified the changes that need to be made with this requirement and will begin drafting the changes. The other rules will be drafted and internally reviewed between February and March. Once they are complete, they will be filed with the Secretary of State's Office and will follow the formal Montana Administrative Procedure Act process. This process involves noticing the public of the proposed amendments, and official comment period, formal public hearing followed by the department's response to the public comment. Once all of this is complete, adoption of the rule can commence.

Projected start date for each activity: 03/01/2016

Projected end date for each activity: 09/30/2017

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity [Child Care Licensing Program](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

[Early Childhood Services Bureau, Office of Legal Affairs](#)

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented [Prevention of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma](#)

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

The Child Care Licensing program has identified the changes that need to be made with this requirement and will begin drafting the changes. The other rules will be drafted and internally reviewed between February and March. Once they are complete, they will be filed with the Secretary of State's Office and will follow the formal Montana Administrative Procedure Act process. This process involves noticing the public of the proposed amendments, and official comment period, formal public hearing followed by the department's response to the public comment. Once all of this is complete, adoption of the rule can commence.

Projected start date for each activity: 03/01/2016

Projected end date for each activity: 09/30/2017

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity [Child Care Licensing Program](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead

agency to complete implementation of this activity

Early Childhood Services Bureau, Office of Legal Affairs

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented [Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio contaminants](#)

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

The Child Care Licensing program has identified the changes that need to be made with this requirement and will begin drafting the changes. The other rules will be drafted and internally reviewed between February and March. Once they are complete, they will be filed with the Secretary of State's Office and will follow the formal Montana Administrative Procedures Act (MAPA) process. This process involves noticing the public of the proposed amendments, and official comment period, formal public hearing followed by the department's response to the public comment. Once all of this is complete, adoption of the rule can commence.

Projected start date for each activity: [04/01/2016](#)

Projected end date for each activity: [09/30/2017](#)

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity [Child Care Licensing Program](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

Early Childhood Services Bureau, Office of Legal Affairs

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented [First aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation \(CPR\) certification](#)

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

The Child Care Licensing program has identified the changes that need to be made with this requirement and will begin drafting the changes. The other rules will be drafted and internally reviewed between February and March. Once they are complete, they will be filed with the Secretary of State's Office and will follow the formal Montana Administrative Procedure Act process. This process involves

noticing the public of the proposed amendments, and official comment period, formal public hearing followed by the department's response to the public comment. Once all of this is complete, adoption of the rule can commence.

Projected start date for each activity: 03/01/2016

Projected end date for each activity: 09/30/2017

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity [Child Care Licensing Program](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

[Early Childhood Services Bureau, Office of Legal Affairs](#)

b) The State/Territory certifies that it has pre-service (prior to initial service) or orientation (period from when service started) and ongoing training requirements, appropriate to the provider setting that address each of the requirements relating to the topic areas listed above. ACF expects these trainings will be part of a broader systematic approach and progression of professional development (as described in Section 6) within a State/Territory that will result in opportunities for child care providers to accumulate knowledge, competencies and credits toward eventual completion of a professional certification or higher education. The law does not specify a specific number of training or education hours but States and Territories are encouraged to consult with *Caring for our Children Basics* for best practices and recommended time needed to address these training requirements.

☒ Yes. The State/Territory certifies that it has pre-service or orientation and ongoing training requirements appropriate to the provider setting that address each of the requirements relating to the topics listed above as of March 1, 2016.

Describe, including at a minimum 1) how the state/territory defines preservice or orientation period, 2) the minimum number of annual preservice or orientation hours required to meet these health, and safety requirements, and 3) ongoing training or education hours required to meet these health and safety requirements

[The Preservice/Orientation period for a teacher starts upon date of hire and ends 90 days after hire date. The Preservice/Orientation consists of 20 hours of required Health and Safety training. The minimum annual training hours are 16 for all provider types.](#)

[The preservice/orientation period for a new provider \(director/owner of a new facility\) starts upon completion of their application and ends 90 days after receiving a provisional license. The Preservice/Orientation consists of 20 hours of required Health and Safety training. The minimum annual training hours are 8 for a Family Friend and Neighbor](#)

provider (FFN), and 20 for Center directors.

- ☐ No. If no, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

5.1.7 Does the State/Territory have health and safety requirements for any of the following optional areas?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- ☒ Nutrition (including age appropriate feeding).

Describe:

Regulations are in place that require providers to provide meals that meet the USDA meal requirements. In addition, the regulations specify the number of meals required throughout the day. This language is found under ARM 37.95.215 and ARM 37.95.711.

☒ Access to physical activity.

Describe:

The regulations require developmentally appropriate activities including physical growth. Outdoor play is required each day. This language is found under ARM 37.95.715 and ARM 37.95.602.

☒ Screen time.

Describe:

The regulations indicate that screen time should be limited to child appropriate programs and should not be excessive. This language is found under ARM 37.95.715.

☒ Caring for children with special needs.

Describe:

The regulations require a special needs health care plan for children with special needs. This plan should be utilized in order to meet the needs of the child. This language is found under ARM 37.95.181. In addition, the requirements also do not allow for discrimination based on disabilities. This language is found under ARM 37.95.108.

☒ Recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect.

Describe:

Regulations are in place that require providers to report suspected abuse and neglect. This language is under ARM 37.95.171.

☒ Other subject areas determined by the State/Territory to be necessary to promote child development or to protect children's health and safety.

Describe:

Montana Law (MCA 52-2-702) requires that children requiring child care be provided such food, shelter, security and safety, guidance and direction, nurture and comfort, and learning experiences commensurate to their ages and capabilities so as to safeguard the growth and development of such children, thereby facilitating their proper physical and emotional maturation. This law gives authority to set forth requirements in order to protect the health, safety and well-being of children attending child care.

5.1.8 States and Territories have the option to exempt relatives (as defined in CCDF regulations as grandparents, great-grandparents, siblings if living in a separate residence, aunts, and uncles, 98.41(A)(ii)(A)) from these CCDF health and safety requirements.

Does the State/Territory exempt relatives from the requirement to receive pre-service or orientation health and safety training on any or all of the listed topics?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Yes, all relatives are exempt from all health and safety training requirements.

If the State/Territory exempts all relatives from the CCDF health and safety training requirements, describe how the State ensures the health and safety of children in relative care.

Relatives will be exempt from monitoring visits, training and health and safety requirements. Relatives and other adults in the household will still be required to complete an annual application and background check. This will ensure that relatives do not have a criminal history that would pose a threat to health and safety of the children in care.

☐ Yes, some relatives are exempt from health and safety training requirements.

If the State/Territory exempts some relatives from the CCDF health and safety training requirements, describe which relatives are exempt from which requirements (all or some) and include how the State/Territory ensures the health and safety of children in relative care.

☐ No, relatives are not exempt from CCDF health and safety training requirements.

5.2 Monitoring and Enforcement Policies and Practices

5.2.1 The State/Territory certifies that the State/Territory shall have in effect policies and practices to ensure that providers for children receiving assistance and their facilities comply with applicable State or local licensing and health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(J))

Effective Date: 09/30/2017

☐ Yes.

The State/Territory certifies that it has policies and practices to ensure compliance with applicable licensing and health and safety requirements for providers receiving CCDF and their facilities as of March 1, 2016. List the policy citation

☒ No. If no, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016) [09/30/2017](#)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other) [Substantially implemented](#)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

[Currently the department has requirements in place applicable to center, group and family child care facilities; the requirements ensure compliance with the health and safety standards. The authority for this activity is granted in §52-2 Part 7 of the Montana Code Annotated and is further enforced through the Administrative Rules of Montana \(ARM\). In order to fully meet this requirement as specified by the reauthorization law, the health and safety requirements need to be implemented for Legally Certified Providers \(LCPs\).](#)

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented [policies and practices to ensure that providers for children receiving assistance and their facilities comply with applicable State or local licensing and health and safety requirements.](#)

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Regulations specific to Legally Certified Providers will be drafted and internally reviewed between February and March. Once they are complete, they will be filed with the Secretary of State's Office and will follow the formal rule making process. This process involves noticing the public of the proposed amendments, and official comment period, formal public hearing followed by the department's response to the public comment.

Projected start date for each activity: 02/01/2016

Projected end date for each activity: 09/30/2017

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity [Child Care Licensing Program](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

[Early Childhood Services Bureau, and Office of Legal Affairs](#)

5.2.2 The CCDBG Act of 2014 added the following provisions for enforcement of licensing which must be in effect no later than November 19, 2016 for all providers who serve children receiving CCDF (with the option to exempt relatives). While the law does not specify strategies to meet these requirements, States and Territories could consider implementing a differential monitoring approach as long as the full complement of licensing and CCDF health and safety standards was representative and the frequency was at least annually.

Effective Date: 10/01/2016

a) **Licensing Inspectors** - It will have policies and practices that ensure that individuals who are hired as licensing inspectors in the State/Territory are qualified to inspect those child care providers and facilities and have received training in related health and safety requirements, and are trained in all aspects of the State's licensure requirements.

(658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(I))

☒ Yes.

The State/Territory certifies that as of March 1, 2016 it has policies and practices that ensure that individuals who are hired as licensing inspectors in the State/Territory are qualified to inspect those child care providers and facilities and have received training in related health and safety requirements, and are trained in all aspects of the State's licensure requirements. List the policy citation and describe the qualifications, including at a minimum how inspector qualifications address training related to the language and cultural diversity of the providers, and how qualifications address being appropriate to the age of children in care and type of provider setting:

The Montana Department of Administration has requirements in place under ARM 2.21.3702 that identify the process for recruitment and selection. The Child Care Licensing Program has a current job description for licensing inspectors that identifies the qualifications required for the position. This includes a Bachelor's degree in social and behavioral sciences, early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, business and public administration. In addition, the position also requires 3-4 years of job-related experience. The job description requires communication skills with the ability to communicate on different levels with a wide variety of individuals from varying socioeconomic backgrounds, including children of all ages, child welfare professionals, providers and staff with less than an eighth grade education to master's level education and concerned families. Upon hire, licensing inspectors receive information on working with tribal agencies. Additional resources are also available through the department and accommodations would be made for language or cultural issues. The qualifications for this position also require knowledge of early childhood development, physical disabilities and other special needs and ability to research new problems and identify needed authoritative resources. The Child Care Licensing Program is also pursuing credentialing through the National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA) for licensing inspectors.

☐ No. If no, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than November 19, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than November 19, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

b) Inspections for Licensed CCDF Providers - It will require licensing inspectors to perform inspections, with not less than one prelicensure inspection, for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards, of each such child care provider and facility in the State/Territory. It will require licensing inspectors to perform not less than annually, one unannounced inspection of licensed CCDF providers for compliance with all child care licensing standards, which shall include an inspection for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards (inspectors may inspect for compliance with all 3 standards at the same time. (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(II))

☒ Yes.

The State/Territory certifies that as of March 1, 2016 it has policies and practices regarding inspections for licensed CCDF providers. List the policy citation and describe the inspection requirements including the frequency of announced and unannounced visits

Starting the week of September 19th, the Child Care Licensing Program began a new inspection process which includes a pre-service inspection for all new facilities and an annual inspection for all facility types (family, group and center). Inspections are conducted using a tool that addresses the health, safety, and fire hazards within a program. The Child Care Licensing Program has developed policies for pre-service inspections and annual inspections. This policy can be found in the Child Care Licensing Policy Manual under CCL-

006.

Prelicensure Inspections:

New child care facilities will be inspected prior to issuing a license or registration. Once an application has been submitted, the licensor will schedule Pre-inspection with the provider. The Preinspection must be completed within 30 days of receiving an application. If non-compliances are found during the licensing inspection, the licensing worker will issue a Statement of Deficiency. Once the Pre-Inspection has been completed, the licensing worker may issue a 3 month Provisional license or registration.

During the Provisional period, the licensing worker will complete the Initial/New Inspection. This inspection will be unannounced and will consist of a full review of the regulations. If non-compliances are found during the licensing inspection, the licensing worker will issue a Statement of Deficiency. The licensing worker may issue another 3 month Provisional license or registration if provider needs additional time to comply with the regulations.

Annual Inspections:

All child care facilities will receive an annual inspection. The unannounced inspection will include review of regulations addressing key health, safety, and fire areas. Non-compliances found outside of the key health and safety areas may be cited if they are observed during the licensing inspection. If non-compliances are found during the licensing inspection, the licensing worker will issue a Statement of Deficiency.

- ☐ No. If no, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than November 19, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than November 19, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

c) Inspections for License-Exempt CCDF Providers (except those serving relatives)) -

It will have policies and practices that require licensing inspectors (or qualified monitors designated by the lead agency) of child care providers and facilities to perform an annual monitoring visit of each license-exempt CCDF provider (unless the provider is described in section (658P(6)(B)). (658E(c)(2)(K)(ii)(IV))

☐ Yes.

The State/Territory certifies that as of March 1, 2016 it has policies and practices regarding inspections for license-exempt CCDF providers. List the policy citation and describe the annual monitoring visit requirements:

☒ No. If no, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than November 19, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than November 19, 2016) [11/19/2017](#)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other) [Not yet started](#)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

[N/A](#)

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented [policies and practices that require licensing inspectors \(or qualified monitors designated by the lead agency\) of child care providers and facilities to perform an annual monitoring visit of each license-exempt CCDF provider \(unless the provider is described in section \(658P\(6\)\(B\)\)\)](#).

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

[The Child Care Licensing Program will be adapting requirements and policies to allow annual inspections for Legally Certified Providers \(LCPs\). A preliminary decision has also been made to change the name to Family Friend and Neighbor \(FFN\). This change will need to go through the administrative rule change process. Regulations specific to legally certified providers will be drafted and internally reviewed between February and March. Once they are complete, they will be filed with the Secretary of State's Office and will follow the formal Montana Administrative Procedure Act process. This process involves noticing the public of the proposed amendments, and official comment period, formal public hearing followed by the department's response to the public comment.](#)

Projected start date for each activity: [02/01/2016](#)

Projected end date for each activity: [11/19/2017](#)

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity [Child Care Licensing Program](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

[Early Childhood Services Bureau, Office of Legal Affairs](#)

d) **Ratio of Licensing Inspectors**) - It will have policies and practices that require the ratio of licensing inspectors to such child care providers and facilities in the State/Territory to be maintained at a level sufficient to enable the State to conduct inspections of such child care providers and facilities on a timely basis in accordance with Federal, State, and local law. (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(III))

☒ Yes.

The State/Territory certifies that it has policies and practices regarding the ratio of licensing inspectors to such child care providers and facilities in the State/Territory. List

the policy citation and list the State/Territory ratio of licensing inspectors:

There are approximately 900 child care providers in Montana. The Child Care Licensing Program has 11.7 FTE for licensing workers. This works out to approximately 77 facilities per licensing worker. Each licensing worker is assigned a caseload based on the service area and the counties within that service area. The caseload may vary from area to area due to the number of providers in the area as well as the travel that is required. Each licensor is responsible for establishing their own survey schedule and shall submit quarterly progress report of the visits/inspections to the Program Manager and/or Bureau Chief. The reports shall be submitted via e-mail.

The Child Care Licensing Program will review the provider to licensor ratio on a quarterly basis to ensure that the ratio does not exceed 100 facilities per licensing worker. In order to assist areas with higher ratios, the Program Manager may utilize licensing workers in other service areas to conduct licensing inspections. Overall, the workload and completion of assigned duties will be assessed quarterly by the Program Manager and any concerns will be reported to the Licensure Bureau Chief. This policy can be found in the Child Care Licensing Policy Manual under CCL-006.

☐ No. If no, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than November 19, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than November 19, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating

agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

e) **Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting** - That child abuse reporting requirements are in place and comply with section of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(i)) (658E(c)(2)(L))

☒ Yes.

Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above. List the Lead Agency's policy citation(s):

[ARM 37.95.171](#) and [MCA 41-3-201](#)

☐ No. If no, the State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than November 19, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than November 19, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

5.2.3 States and Territories have the option to exempt relatives (as defined in CCDF regulations as grandparents, great-grandparents, siblings if living in a separate residence, aunts, and uncles, 98.41(A)(ii)(A)) from inspection requirements.

Note this exception only applies if the individual cares ONLY for relative children. Does the State/Territory exempt relatives from inspection requirements listed in 5.2.2?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Yes, all relatives are exempt from all inspection requirements.

If the State/Territory exempts all relatives from the inspection requirements, describe how the State ensures the health and safety of children in relative care.

A decision has been made to exempt relative care from inspections. Relatives will still be required to complete an annual application as well as background checks. This will ensure that relatives do not have a criminal history that would pose a threat to health and safety of the children in care.

☐ Yes, some relatives are exempt from inspection requirements.

If the State/Territory exempts some relatives from the inspection requirements, describe which relatives are exempt from which requirements (all or some) and include how the State/Territory ensures the health and safety of children in relative care.

☐ No, relatives are not exempt from inspection requirements.

5.3 Criminal Background Checks

The CCDBG Act of 2014 added new requirements for States and Territories receiving CCDF funds to conduct criminal background checks on child care staff members and prospective staff members of child care providers. States and Territories must have requirements, policies, and procedures in place to conduct criminal background checks for staff members of child care providers (other than relatives) that are licensed, regulated or registered under State/Territory law or receive CCDF funds. Background check requirements apply to any staff member who is employed by a child care provider for compensation or whose activities involve the care or

supervision of children or unsupervised access to children. For family child care homes, this includes the caregiver requesting a check of him/herself, as well as other adults in the household that may have unsupervised access to children. These provisions must be in place no later than September 30, 2017.

The CCDBG Act of 2014 specifies what a comprehensive criminal background check includes and a child care provider must submit a request to the appropriate State/Territory agency for a criminal background check for each child care staff member, including prospective child care staff members at least once every 5 years. A criminal background check must include a search of: State criminal and sex offender registry in the State where the staff member resides and each State where the staff member has resided over the past 5 years; State child abuse and neglect registry in the State where the staff member resides and each State where the staff member has resided over the past 5 years, National Crime Information Center (run by the FBI); FBI fingerprint check using Next Generation Identification ; and National Sex Offender Registry. Child care staff members cannot be employed by a provider receiving CCDF if they refuse a background check; make materially false statements in connection with the background check; are registered or required to be registered on the State or National Sex Offender Registry; have been convicted of a felony consisting of: murder, child abuse or neglect, crimes against children, spousal abuse, crime involving rape or sexual assault, kidnapping, arson, physical assault or battery, or subject to an individual review, at the State's option, a drug-related offense committed during the preceding 5 years; or have been convicted of a violent misdemeanor committed as an adult against a child.

Timeliness of background checks - The State/Territory must conduct the background checks as quickly as possible and shall not exceed 45 days after the child care provider submitted the request. The State/Territory shall provide the results of the background check in a statement that indicates whether the staff member is eligible or ineligible, without revealing specific disqualifying information. If the staff member is ineligible, the State/Territory will provide information about each disqualifying crime to the staff member.

Fees for background checks - Fees that a State/Territory may charge for the costs of processing applications and administering a criminal background check may not exceed actual costs to the State/Territory for processing and administration.

Transparency - The State/Territory must ensure that policies and procedures for conducting criminal background checks are published on the State/Territory's consumer education website (also see section 2.3) or other publicly available venue.

Appeals process - The State/Territory shall have a process for a child care staff member to appeal the results of their background check to challenge the accuracy and completeness.

Privacy considerations - Lead Agency may not publicly release the results of individual background checks.

5.3.1 Describe the status of the State/Territory's requirements, policies, and procedures for criminal background checks for child care staff members and child care providers.

Effective Date: 10/01/2016

☐ Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above.

List the policy citation within the Lead Agency's rules and describe the policies and procedures for criminal background checks using 5.3.2 through 5.3.9 below.

☒ Not implemented. The State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2017). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2017) [09/30/2017](#)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other) [Partially implemented](#)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

[The following requirements have currently been met: Montana criminal, DMV and child protective background checks; FBI checks for individuals who have lived out of state in the last 5 years; regulations in place requiring background checks prior to approval, misrepresentations and disqualifications; and policy in place for reviewing history with individual as well as administrative reconsideration/appeal process. When an individual has a disqualifying history, the provider is informed the individual has a disqualifying history and only the individual is given specifics of the background check results. The disqualifying history is not publicly released to anyone except the individual who has the disqualifying history. Currently background checks are required for the provider, all staff \(caregivers, administrative staff, aides, volunteers, kitchen and custodial staff\) and all persons over the age of 18 residing in the child care facility or who stay in the child care facility on a regular basis. There will be no change to the individuals who will be required to receive background checks.](#)

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented. [FBI fingerprint check using Next Generation Identification](#)

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

[Update policies and requirements to reflect new requirements for background checks. These checks will be conducted every 5 years.](#)

Projected start date for each activity: [02/01/2016](#)

Projected end date for each activity: [09/30/2017](#)

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity [Child Care Licensing Program](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

[Department of Justice, Office of Legal Affairs](#)

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented. [State child abuse and neglect registry in the State where the staff member resides and each State where the staff member has resided over the past 5 years,](#)

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

[Develop a process for working with other states in order to conduct out of state CPS checks.](#)

Projected start date for each activity: [02/01/2016](#)

Projected end date for each activity: [09/30/2017](#)

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity [Child Care Licensing Program](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

[Department of Justice, Office of Legal Affairs](#)

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented. [State criminal and sex offender registry in the State where the staff member resides and each State](#)

where the staff member has resided over the past 5 years;

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Update policies and requirements to reflect new requirements for background checks

Projected start date for each activity: 04/01/2016

Projected end date for each activity: 09/30/2017

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity Child Care Licensing Program

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

Department of Justice, Office of Legal Affairs

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented. National Sex Offender Registry.

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Update policies and requirements to reflect new requirements for background checks

Projected start date for each activity: 04/01/2016

Projected end date for each activity: 09/30/2017

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity Child Care Licensing Program

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

Department of Justice, Office of Legal Affairs

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented. Requirements, policies, and procedures in place to conduct criminal background checks for staff members of child care providers (other than relatives) that are licensed, regulated or registered under State/Territory law or receive CCDF funds.

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

The disqualifying criteria must also include arson and Sex Offender Registry. Montana will update policies and requirements to reflect new requirements for background checks.

Projected start date for each activity: 04/01/2016

Projected end date for each activity: 09/30/2017

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity [Child Care Licensing Program](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

[Department of Justice, Office of Legal Affairs](#)

Unmet requirement - Identify the requirement(s) to be implemented. [Ensure that policies and procedures for conducting criminal background checks are published on the State/Territory's consumer education website](#)

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

The background check processes are currently available in rule and policy format. The Child Care Licensing Program will modify this information into an easier to understand format and apply it to the agency website.

Projected start date for each activity: 05/01/2016

Projected end date for each activity: 09/30/2016

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity [Child care Licensing Program](#)

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

[Early Childhood Services Bureau](#)

5.3.2 Describe the process and procedures for conducting background checks in a timely manner, including which agency/entity is responsible and how the Lead Agency ensures that background checks performed by a 3rd party meet the requirements, protecting the privacy of child care staff members, and providing opportunities for applicants to appeal the results of background checks.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

Paperwork is required to be submitted within 15 days of hire. Once the paperwork for background checks have been submitted and are complete, background checks can be processed. The Child Care Licensing Program conducts name-based child protective, criminal and Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) checks. FBI checks are received by the Child Care Licensing Program and processed by the Department of Justice. A fingerprint scanner has been purchased and will be available to the Child Care Licensing Program. This will assist with expediting finger prints background checks. Currently this process is conducted within 45 days as long as the required paperwork is submitted by the provider.

5.3.3 Describe how the State/Territory is assisting other States process background checks, including which agency/entity is responsible for working with other states

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

The Child Care Licensing Program will serve as the conduit for other states that may need Montana information. Our role in this respect will be to gather the information from the respective state and then work with our partners at the Montana Department of Justice and Montana DPHHS Child and Family Services Division to ensure the recipient state can receive the requested information.

5.3.4 Does the State have a review process for individuals disqualified due to a felony drug offense to determine if that individual is still eligible for employment?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Yes.

Describe:

If an individual has a felony drug offense within the last 5 years, they would not be approved. Prior to sending the notification, the individual would be made aware of the history and be given the opportunity to provide a statement. If they are unable to show that the history was incorrect, the licensee/provider would be informed that the individual has a disqualifying history that would prohibit approval. The licensee/provider would not be able to request an administrative reconsideration because the crime is considered an automatic disqualifier. If the conviction was over 5 years, the offense could be a disqualifier. In this type of case, the licensee/provider could request an administrative reconsideration.

☐ No.

5.3.5 Does the Lead Agency disqualify child care staff members based on their conviction for other crimes not specifically listed above?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Yes.

Describe:

The Child Care Licensing Program requirements also include the following disqualifiers for a felony conviction: assault on an officer, assault with a weapon, prostitution, robbery, and burglary. In addition, the following misdemeanor convictions may also result in a disqualification: partner/family member assault, endangering the welfare of a child, misdemeanor unlawful transaction with children, or a crime involving an abuse of the public trust. The Legally Certified Provider requirements would also disqualify the provider if they have DUI within the last 3 years.

☐ No.

5.3.6 Does your State State/Territory exempt relatives (defined in CCDF regulations as grandparents, great-grandparents, siblings if living in a separate residence, aunts, and uncles, 98.41(A)(ii)(A)) from background checks?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- ☐ Yes, all relatives are exempt from all background check requirements.
- ☐ Yes, some relatives are exempt from the background check requirements. If the State /Territory exempts some relatives from background check requirements, describe which relatives are exempt. from which requirements (some or all).

Describe.

- ☒ No, relatives are not exempt from background checks.

5.3.7 Describe how fees charged for completing the background checks do not exceed the actual cost of processing and administration, including how the State State/Territory ensures that 3rd party vendors or contractors do not charge fees that exceed the actual cost of processing and administration, if applicable.

Lead Agencies can report that no fees are charged if applicable:

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe.

The Child Care Licensing Program does not currently charge fees for state level background checks. The fees for conducting the fingerprint check are determined by the Department of Justice and/or the FBI. Fees for completing the background checks will not exceed actual costs.

5.3.8 Describe how background check policies and procedures are published on the State/Territory consumer education website or made publicly available on another venue:

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe.

The background check requirements are outlined within the Administrative Rules of Montana. Regulation booklets are available on the Child Care Licensing Program website. The Administrative Rules of Montana are also available on the Secretary of State's website.

5.3.9 Does the Lead Agency release aggregated data by crime?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☐ Yes.

List types of crime included in the aggregated data:

☒ No.

6 Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce

Teacher-child interactions and relationships, intentional strategies to engage children and their parents, and use of curriculum and assessment to inform practices with children are key components of high quality child care. These require a competent, skilled, and stable workforce. Research has shown that specialized training and education, positive and well-organized work environments and adequate compensation promote teacher recruitment, stability, diversity of the early childhood workforce, and effectiveness with young children in child care. In addition, professional development strategies that emphasize on-site mentoring and coaching of teachers have emerged as promising to change practices with children and families. Professional development, whether training, on-site coaching and mentoring, registered apprenticeship, or higher education coursework, should reflect the research and best practices of child development in all domains and cultural competence.

The CCDBG Act of 2014 requires States and Territories to establish professional development and training requirements in key areas such as health and safety, early learning guidelines, responding to challenging behavior and engaging families. States and Territories are required to offer ongoing annual training and to establish a progression of professional development opportunities to improve knowledge and skills of CCDF providers. (658E(c)(2)(G)) An example of how a State/Territory might address this is to establish a system or framework of professional development that includes professional standards, a "career ladder" that allows an individual to build knowledge and skills in a cumulative manner from introductory training to advance level

education, including obtaining credentials and post-secondary degrees. Professional development should be designed in a manner that aligns to competencies and qualifications that reflect working with children of different ages, English language learners, children with disabilities and the differentiated roles in all settings, such as teachers, teacher assistants, and directors. Training and education supporting professional development is also one of the options States and Territories have for investing their CCDF quality funds. (658G(b)(1)) ACF encourages States and Territories to collaborate and coordinate with other early childhood educator professional development resources, such as Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grants, quality funds available through the Preschool Development grants, and funds available through Head Start and Early Head Start, to the extent practicable. Responsive, well-qualified adult caregivers are one of the most important factors in children's development and learning in child care settings. ACF strongly encourages States and Territories to link CCDF health and safety trainings (see Section 5) and child development trainings and education to this broader professional development framework as the foundation for building a knowledgeable early childhood education workforce. Questions related to requirements for recruiting and retaining a qualified and effective child care workforce have been consolidated into Section 6.

6.1 Training and Professional Development Requirements

The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a requirement that the State/Territory develop training and professional development requirements designed to enable child care providers to promote the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of children and to improve the knowledge and skills of the child care workforce. Such requirements shall be applicable to child care providers caring for children receiving CCDF across the entire age span from birth through age 12. (658E(c)(2)(G)) Training and professional development should be accessible and appropriate across settings and types of providers, including family child care home providers and child care center staff.

The State/Territory also must develop and implement strategies to strengthen the business practices of child care providers to expand the supply and improve the quality of child care services. (658E(c)(2)(V))

For purposes of this section, the term professional development is inclusive of credit bearing coursework, postsecondary degree programs, and technical assistance (targeted assistance such as mentoring, coaching or consultation) activities. Health and safety topics that require renewal of a credential or certification should be considered continuing education unit trainings.

6.1.1 Describe the status of the State's training and professional development requirements to enable child care providers to promote the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children and to improve the knowledge and skills of the child care workforce.

a) Provide ongoing training and professional development that is accessible for the diversity of providers in the State/Territory; provide for a progression of professional development reflecting research and best practice to meet the developmental needs of participating infants, toddlers, preschool, and school-age children and that is aligned to foundational and specialized competencies (including different ages of children, English language learners, and children with disabilities); and improve the quality and stability of the child care workforce (such as supports an individual to build on entry- and mid-level training and education (which may include higher education) to attain a higher level credential or professional certification and retention in the child care program).

b) Are developed in consultation with the State Advisory Council (SAC) on Early Childhood Education and Care or other state or state-designated cross-agency body if there is no SAC that addresses training, professional development and education of child care providers and staff.)

c) Incorporate knowledge and application of the State/Territory's early learning and developmental guidelines (where applicable), the State/Territory's health and safety standards (as described in section 5), and incorporate social-emotional/behavioral and early childhood mental health intervention models, which may include positive behavior intervention and support models (as described in Section 2)

d) Are accessible to providers supported through Indian tribes or tribal organizations receiving CCDF

e) Appropriate, to the extent practicable, for child care providers caring for children receiving child care subsidies, including children of different age groups, English language learners, children with disabilities, and Native Americans, including Indians and Native Hawaiians.

Effective Date: 10/01/2016

☒ Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above. Describe using 6.1.2 through 6.1.6 below.

☐ Not implemented. The State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text

responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

6.1.2 Describe how the State provides ongoing training and professional development, provides for a progression of professional development (such as allows an individual to build on entry- and mid-level training and education both in terms of the skills and knowledge they attain but also in terms of credit that leads toward a higher level credential or certification, including articulation agreements) reflecting research and best practice to meet the developmental needs of participating children and improve the quality and stability of the child care workforce:

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ State/Territory professional standards and competencies.

Describe.

Montana's Early Care and Education Knowledge Base document was rewritten and updated in 2013. It is used as the basis for all training and professional development approval in Montana describing what practitioners need to know, be able to do and understand to care for and education children ages birth - age 8. It addresses cultural and linguistic diversity and inclusion of children with disabilities in several content areas. Montana has two courses (available for college credit) on inclusion that are required training in the QRIS program.

☒ Career ladder or lattice.

Describe.

The MT Early Care and Education Career Path includes eleven levels that outline steps to advance through education, training and experience from basic entry level to advanced degrees in early childhood education and has been modified to accommodate new pathways several times since its adoption in 1998. It will undergo a revision in 2016 to accommodate MT's newly approved ECE: P-3 teacher license endorsement.

☒ Articulation agreements between two- and four-year postsecondary early childhood education or degree programs.

Describe.

Montana's Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium (ECHEC) meets regularly to address needs, trends, and best practices in early childhood education from a higher education perspective. Some of the Montana University System institutions have articulation agreements and some do not. Some tribal colleges also have articulation agreements and some do not. Further work to develop and/or update articulation agreements is in the 2016 action plan for ECHEC.

☒ Community-based training approved by a state regulatory body to meet licensing or regulatory requirements.

Describe.

Community-based training is approved through a web-based application process through the Early Childhood Project. A two-step process is in place for a course to be approved upon development and then scheduled for a specific day and time as an event. Public events appear on the Statewide Training Calendar at the ECP website. A growing number of training sponsors from a variety of community-based agencies utilize the system to expand training opportunities for practitioners. Tutorials are available to any agency interested in using the system and the ECP actively recruits new training sponsors. Child Care Licensing utilizes the ECP Registry database to verify that

individual staff in state regulated child care facilities have met annual training requirements by checking Professional Development Records online.

- ☒ Workforce data, including recruitment, retention, registries or other documentation, and compensation information.

Describe.

Workforce data is available from the Early Childhood Project's Registry which is voluntary except for all program staff participating in MT's QRIS program. This verified data is used for policy and program development related to requirements in child care licensing rules, QRIS, and The Registry. Data is also utilized in grant writing and legislative proposals to advance early care and education in MT. Wage and benefit information is collected as an option in the Registry employment verification process. MT contributes to the National Workforce Registry Alliance dataset that is reported upon regularly since the Early Childhood Project successfully completed the Alliance's Partnership Eligibility Review process in 2011.

- ☒ Advisory structure that provides recommendations for the development, revision, and implementation of the professional development system or framework.

Describe.

The ECP convenes the Career Development Advisory Board biannually to examine current data, trends, issues and updates to the operation of the various programs it administers including The Practitioner Registry, the Professional Development Approval System, incentives and awards, the Apprenticeship Program, Directors' Credential, annual leadership professional development events, and policies and procedures. All key statewide partners are represented on this board. Some members and two ECP staff serve on the State's Best Beginnings Advisory Council.

- ☒ Continuing education unit trainings and credit-bearing professional development.

Describe.

Continuing education unit training and credit-bearing professional development are both widely available throughout the state through the CCR & R infrastructure, other community-based training sponsors, and the higher education system. The Statewide Training Calendar includes all approved community-based training. Each higher education institution has a website and the Early Childhood Project posts early childhood higher education information on its website and provides Career Advising via email or phone consultation.

- ☒ State-approved trainings.

Describe.

Early childhood practitioners must complete training approved through the Early Childhood Project to receive hours for child care licensing, QRIS, and The Registry's annual renewal training requirement.

- ☒ Inclusion in state and/or regional workforce and economic development plans.

Describe.

The Registry is available to and inclusive of all staff working in early childhood programs with a variety of funding sources-child care, Head Start, Early Head Start, public school preschools, faith-based, campus-based and those individuals in support roles who offer provider services. The Registry is expanding in 2016 to offer a tracking system for all Part C Family Support Specialists qualifications and ongoing professional development. Very preliminary exploration through MT's Project LAUNCH grant of using The Registry in Montana to identify early childhood mental health consultants in the future is underway in 2016. The Career Path includes the MT Child Care and Development Specialist Apprenticeship program as an on- the- job learning option.

- ☐ Other.

Describe.

6.1.3 Describe how the State/Territory developed its training and professional development requirements in consultation with the State Advisory Council (SAC) on Early Childhood Education and Care (if applicable) or other state or state-designated cross-agency body if there is no SAC

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe.

MT established a Career Development Task Force in 1995 to begin to plan for the development of a system of early care and education career development. Child care licensing has always been a participant in this work along with all other key state government and community-based partners. A State Plan was written and adopted in 1996 at which time the task force morphed into the existing MT Early Care and Education Advisory Board which continues to guide the work of the Early Childhood Project at Montana State University. Each year the board has identified priorities and each year the ECP develops a work plan based

upon the ECP staff, boards, and funder's recommendations. Many members of the current board also serve on the Governor's Best Beginnings Advisory Council and the Office of Public Instructions' Early Childhood Partnership for Professional Development.

The BBAC (Montana's SAC) has a representative on the Early Care and Education Advisory Board. This representative reports to the BBAC on the business of training and professional development. The representatives from the Early Care and Education Advisory Board, as well as the Executive Director of the Early Childhood Project, Workforce Development organization are members of the BBAC and request recommendations, advice, and give reports on the progress of PD and trainings in Montana.

A Workgroup (formerly known as Committee) for Professional Development was formed for discussion and recommendations on the health and safety training and orientation to meet new CCDF requirements. This BBAC Workgroup met with the Department to present a draft strategic plan.

6.1.4 Describe how the State/Territory incorporates knowledge and application of the State's early learning and developmental guidelines (where applicable), the State/Territory's health and safety standards (as described in section 5), and incorporates social-emotional/behavioral and early childhood mental health intervention models, which may include positive behavior intervention and support models (as described in Section 2) into its training and professional development requirements

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe.

MT's Early Learning Standards (MELS) are embedded into the QRIS program and the Professional Development Approval System. An online course about the MELS is required training for QRIS programs' staff. Each newly developed course seeking approval in MT must identify (if applicable) the Early Learning Standard and sub-domain that will be addressed prior to approval. This information is posted to the Statewide Training Calendar on the Early Childhood Project website for each scheduled event.

The health and safety standards will be addressed in the pre-service and orientation training requirements outlined in 6.1.1 above. Increasing requirements for annual ongoing training hours with a phase-in strategy will enable practitioners to adjust to the increase in annual

training hours. It is important to note that providers who have been voluntarily participating in The Registry have had an annual training requirement of 23 hours therefore many providers are already achieving many hours above and beyond what child care licensing has required. With the advent of MT's QRIS program, many enhancements have been made to the continuum of training available to all practitioners. The new requirements provide MT with further ability to raise the bar on professional development across the board.

MT requires Pyramid Model (PM) training as part of the QRIS program which is available through the CCR & R agencies statewide to all practitioners. All education staff are required to complete the following: The two hour Introduction to the PM course which is available face-to-face and online; Module 1 (6 hours) that addresses birth -five nurturing and responsive relationships and high quality supportive environments; Module 2 (6 hours) that addresses birth - five targeted social emotional supports and Introduction to Module 3 (2 hours) that addresses intensive intervention and supports for children and families. The Behavior Support Team within the program is required to complete the full Module 3 (8 hours) birth to five. Additionally, MT has developed a coaching system within QRIS to coach the Pyramid Model to fidelity. This includes statewide coordination, onsite program coaching for directors, program staff and individual classroom teachers using Pyramid Model tools such as TPOT, TIPITOS, Benchmarks of Quality and Inventory of Practices. This statewide coaching system will be launched fully April 1, 2016 when the new CCR & R contracts begin.

6.1.5 Describe how the State's training and professional development requirements are accessible to providers supported through Indian tribes or tribal organizations receiving CCDF (as applicable)

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe.

All of Montana's approved training that is posted on the Early Childhood Project website's Statewide Training Calendar is available to all practitioners, including tribal early childhood programs.

Montana is working with tribes to ensure PD and training are fully accessible. Some examples of this work include:

- Northern Cheyenne indicated a need for their child care providers to be on the Early Childhood Project Practitioner Registry. The Early Childhood Project gave a webinar

to a Northern Cheyenne leadership team about the Registry. The goal is to have Northern Cheyenne providers enroll on the Registry, and they have a locally trained team that can provide assistance as needed.

- The Statewide Pyramid Model Coordinator traveled to Northern Cheyenne to provide a training on the Pyramid Model to their child care providers.
- Rob Corso, the Project Coordinator of the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, traveled to the Blackfeet and Crow reservations to provide training on the Pyramid Model
- The Early Head Start / Child Care Partnerships team invites all tribes to participate in their quarterly meetings. The meetings include participation from state partners including the Early Childhood Project, STARS to Quality, the Quality Assurance Division, T&TA, and the Early Childhood Services Bureau. We anticipate increased PD opportunities will result from increased tribal participation with this grant.
- Professional Development has been provided to Fort Peck by the Head Start State Collaboration Director.
- Rocky Boy and Fort Belknap received site visits from the Head Start State Collaboration Director, and discussed PD and training opportunities for their tribal programs.
- Fort Belknap met with the Early Childhood Services Bureau to discuss strategies and steps for their child care providers to be active on the Registry. Fort Belknap has taken initial steps toward an effective process for their child care providers to find and receive meaningful training.
- Support is offered by the Montana Preschool Development Grant for tribes to add child care providers to the Practitioner Registry

6.1.6 Describe how the State/Territory's training and professional development requirements are appropriate, to the extent practicable, for child care providers caring for children receiving child care subsidies, including children of different age groups (such as specialized credentials for providers who care for infants and/or school-age children), English language learners, children with disabilities, and Native Americans, including Indians and Native Hawaiians.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe.

Montana's Professional Development Approval System provides approved training aligned with Montana's Early Care and Education Knowledge Base and MT's Early Learning Standards (MELS), both of which address family cultural and linguistic diversity and children

with disabilities, to all providers in Montana through the Statewide Training Calendar. The MT Early Care and Education Knowledge Base. MT Early Learning Standards and other relevant Special Events, Conferences, and Courses are also posted on the Early Childhood Project website under Find Training. Each CCR & R also provides a website with information about local training that has been approved. Additionally, MT provides incentives and awards for completion of training tracks (Health and Safety, Inclusion, Social/Emotional Development) that are available to all licensed and registered providers. Awards are also provided to providers who complete the Infant Toddler Caregiver Education Course or the Preschool Teacher Education Course (60 hours or 4 college credits/each) and receive certification. These courses are required in QRIS as are the two Inclusion Courses (available for college credit).

Montana has a mixed delivery system for training, which includes in person and online. This mixed delivery system allows all provider types, including those serving school-age children, serving Native American children, or serving children in rural areas, to be able to attend trainings online and at a time that is convenient for them. Montana's contractor for distance learning courses through www.childcaretraining.org, has software to be able to translate courses submitted in other languages into English for facilitation and grading purposes. Montana has a Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver stipend. The stipend is designed to support individuals who are caring for infants in licensed child care centers or registered group or family child care homes by:

1. Encouraging on-going skill enhancement,
2. Increasing their understanding of child development, and
3. Providing a \$1600 incentive award if the caregiver remains in a stable employment situation for at least 18 months.

After completing 6, 12, and 18 months of continuous employment, and providing direct care for infants and toddlers in a licensed center or registered child care home, a certified infant toddler caregiver will receive a stipend. The stipends are paid directly to the Certified Infant/Toddler caregiver. Participation in the Certified Infant Toddler stipend program entails a commitment by the caregiver to the center or home at which they are employed. If a participant leaves their employment (for any reason) before they have completed the 18-month period for which their stipend was approved, they may not continue in the program or reapply from another facility.

Inclusion courses are available for all child care providers. Inclusion I Foundations: Course on Inclusion in Early Childhood provides the foundations for inclusion. Topics include:

Introduction to Inclusion, Recognizing Young Children's Strengths and Needs, Creating an Accessible Environment, Building Partnerships with Parents and Families, and Being Part of the Team. The course is 15 weeks and is offered as 15 hours of state-approved training or for one academic credit. Inclusion II Strategies: Course on Inclusion in Early Childhood provides basic strategies for inclusion. Topics include: Maintaining a Safe and Healthy Environment, Arranging the Environment for Learning, Increasing the Playability of Toys and Play Materials, Guiding the Behavior of Young Children, Facilitating Young Children's Communication, Positioning Young Children, and Inclusion and Beyond. The course is 15 weeks and is offered to satisfy 30 hours of state-approved training or for two academic credits.

6.1.7 Describe the strategies the State/Territory uses to recruit and retain providers who will serve eligible children. Check all that apply and describe.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Financial assistance for attaining credentials and post-secondary degrees.

Describe.

The Early Childhood Services Bureau contracts with The Early Childhood Project (ECP) to award Higher Education Professional Development Awards (PDIA-HE), as well as CDA scholarships. The Higher Ed PDIA has two tracks: \$400 for the completion of 2-5 early childhood credits per semester and \$1,000 for the completion of a minimum of 6 credits per semester. The course of study must lead to an early childhood credential, certificate, or degree for the 6 or more credit track. These awards are available every Fall, Spring, and Summer semester. The CDA scholarship pays for the CDA Assessment fee of \$425, as well as the renewal assessment fee of \$100. The ECP has an account with the CDA Council from which awards are withdrawn on behalf of individuals. There is also financial assistance available through ECP for individuals interested in obtaining the Montana ECE: P-3 teacher endorsement or an early childhood master's degree made possible through the Montana Preschool Development Grant.

☒ Financial incentives linked to education attainment and retention.

Describe.

ECP offers PDIA awards for individuals completing specific tracks of training within the state. There are Practitioner Registry Renewal and Achievement AWARDS available, which

encourage individuals to stay current on the Practitioner Registry, but to move up on the Career Path. The Early Childhood Services Bureau offers PDIA awards for completion of both the 60-hour Certified Preschool Teacher course and the Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver Course. There is also a continuity of care stipend award that is connected to completion of the Infant Toddler course and continued employment with a specific program and group of infants and/or toddlers.

☒ Registered apprenticeship programs.

Describe.

The Montana Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program (MECAP) is a training program for people in the field of early care and education that includes on-the-job learning with the support of a mentor and completion of 20-24 credits in early childhood education. The result is that an apprentice learns both the theoretical and practical aspects of the job, earns a Child Care Development Specialist Certificate from the MT Department of Labor and Industry, and achieves Level 4 on the Montana Practitioner Registry. This program is administered by ECP.

☒ Outreach to high school (including career and technical) students.

Describe.

The ECP invited the coordinator of career and technical education at the Office of Public Instruction to a board meeting almost 3 years ago and a subcommittee was formed to pursue agreements with high school family and consumer science coursework whereby students could gain credit for high school child development course work in the Pathways program that could lead to pursuit of a post-secondary degree in Early Childhood Education. Unfortunately, OPI did not provide support for that coordinator to pursue the work to implement the program more widely in early childhood at that time. Some EC higher education programs work with their high schools to create a formal pathway, but it is not widely present in the state. This is an issue that is continually raised and needs to be addressed in a strategic fashion statewide. Many high school student are employed in early childhood programs and there may well be a promising source of workforce recruitment and higher education that is currently untapped and undeveloped. There has been interest expressed by the high school teachers repeatedly to help link their students to the career development work at ECP.

☐ Policies for paid sick leave.

Describe.

☐ Policies for paid annual leave.

Describe.

☐ Policies for health care benefits.

Describe.

☐ Policies for retirement benefits.

Describe.

☒ Support for providers' mental health (such as training in reflective practices and stress reduction techniques, health and mental health consultation services).

Describe.

The core of Montana's Early Care and Education Knowledge Base is a content area entitled Personal Dispositions which addresses teacher health and well-being as does the area of Professionalism. Training is frequently approved that addresses research and strategies to reduce stress and promote well-being related to work in the early childhood field.

☐ Other.

Describe.

6.1.8 Describe how the State/Territory will recruit providers for whom English is not their first language, or who will serve and be available for families for whom English is not their first language.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe.

Montana will look at ways in which we can recruit providers for whom English is not their first language. One of Montana's Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies has software that offers applications in another language for Legally Certified Providers. The Lead Agency will respond to a need for families and providers for whom English is not their first language upon request. Informational materials are available through the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies. The Lead Agency will continue to strengthen its recruitment strategies to be sure

we are meeting the needs of diverse populations. Another Child Care Resource and Referral Agency is equipped with an English education program, Rosetta Stone Language Learning software. Community members are able to come to the office and use the software as a foundation of learning, then are able to go to the Adult Learning Center in their community to build upon their knowledge.

6.1.9 How will the Lead Agency overcome language barriers to serve providers for whom English is not their first language? Check the strategies, if any, that your State/Territory has chosen to implement.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- ☒ Informational materials in non-English languages
- ☒ Training and technical assistance in non-English languages
- ☐ CCDF health and safety requirements in non-English languages
- ☐ Provider contracts or agreements in non-English languages
- ☐ Website in non-English languages
- ☒ Bilingual caseworkers or translators available
- ☐ Collect information to evaluate on-going need, recruit, or train a culturally or linguistically diverse workforce
- ☐ Other.

Describe.

☐ None

If the Lead Agency checked any option above related to providing information or services in other non-English languages, please list the primary languages offered (top 3) or specify that the State has the ability to have translation/interpretation in all primary and secondary languages

Montana has the ability to have translation/interpretation in all primary and secondary languages with a telephone interpretative service.

6.1.10 The State/Territory must use CCDF for activities to improve the quality or availability of child care, including training and technical assistance to providers on identifying and serving homeless children and families. (658E(c)(3)(B)(i) Describe the status of the State/Territory's training and technical assistance to providers on identifying and serving homeless children and their families (connects to Section 3.2.2).

Effective Date: 09/30/2016

Describe the status of the State/Territory's training and technical assistance to providers on identifying and serving homeless children and their families (connects to Section 3.2.2).

☒ Yes.

The State certifies that no later than March 1, 2016 it will provide training and technical assistance to providers on identifying and serving homeless children and their families.

Describe that training and technical assistance for providers

The Lead Agency will provide training and technical assistance for providers on identifying and serving homeless children and their families through a training available online as part of our continuing education process. The course was developed by the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development through the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma Child Care Services and has been tailored to the needs of providers in Montana. This course will help participants to define homelessness according to the McKinney-Vento definition and to discover how being homeless affects the child's health and development and participants will also be provided guidance strategies to support young children experiencing homelessness. It will be a 3 hour course with quizzes and online learning best practices embedded throughout. Information and resources for homelessness are also available on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website.

☐ No. The State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

6.2 Supporting Training and Professional Development of the Child Care Workforce with CCDF Quality Funds

States and Territories may use the quality set-aside discussed in detail in section 7 to support the training and professional development of the child care workforce.

6.2.1 If checked yes to 7.1 in the next section, check which content is included training and professional development activities. Check all that apply.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Yes, If yes,

a) Describe the measures relevant to this use of funds that the State/Territory will use to evaluate the State/Territory's progress in improving the quality of child care programs

and services in the State/Territory.

Detailed quarterly reports are submitted to the Early Childhood Services Bureau by the Early Childhood Project that indicate data regarding The Registry, the Professional Development Approval System, and incentives and awards. Customized reports about the workforce, wages are available upon request and developed as needed. The Career Development Advisory Board receives a full annual report of ECP operations for review at their annual May meeting. The ECP develops an annual Work Plan that identifies goals, objectives and activities for each year. The ECP and each CCR & R agency is monitored by the Early Childhood Services Bureau on a regular basis to ensure completion of goals, objectives and activities and to address successes, challenges and needs related to performance.

b) Indicate which funds will be used for this activity (check all that apply)

☒ CCDF funds.

Describe:

MT's career development program is managed by the Early Childhood Project in collaboration with CCR & R agencies serving multi-county areas. CCR&Rs and the Early Childhood Project (ECP) are funded through CCDF quality funds. Additionally the ECP sponsors the Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium to provide a comprehensive, cohesive and coordinated continuum of professional development. Higher education grants are available through the Early Childhood Services Bureau to help institutions of higher education meet underserved areas of the state.

☒ Other funds.

Describe:

MT Preschool Development Grant funds are being utilized to support early childhood workforce development to provide financial assistance for practitioners seeking the new ECE:P-3 teacher license endorsement available at UM Western, UM and Salish Kootenai College or a master's degree in ECE from the University of Montana; course revision and development to meet the P-3 requirement at MT higher education institutions; for research regarding the EC Workforce and the new endorsement. State General Fund supports the expansion of MT's QRIS program that requires specific training and coaching at certain levels. EHS/Child Care Partnership Grant is being used to blend funds with the Early Childhood Services Bureau to offer training on Creative Curriculum, Teaching Strategies GOLD, Cultural Competency, CDA preparation and the Pyramid Model. Head Start State Collaboration funds will be used

to produce a video to demonstrate implementation of the Pyramid Model and to align Head Start Standards with MT Professional Development work. The MT Project LAUNCH grant sponsored a Practice-Based Coaching training to support coaching in early childhood programs and may do so again in the future. Each Comprehensive System for Personnel Development (CSPD) region receives funding to provide early childhood professional development opportunities to support inclusion. The Office of Public Instruction support the MT Behavior Initiative and annual conference each summer to promote the use of multi-tiered system of support for behavior which includes an early childhood track.

c) Check which content is included in training and professional development activities. Check all that apply.

- ☒ Promoting the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children, including those related to nutrition and physical activity, using scientifically-based, developmentally-appropriate and age-appropriate strategies as required in 6.1.1c.

Describe:

The Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS) and the MT Early Care and Education Knowledge Base both address all areas of development and provide the foundation for all approved training and professional development in MT. The MELS were adopted as the basis of content for preschools in the public schools.

- ☒ Implementing behavior management strategies, including positive behavior interventions and support models that promote positive social-emotional development and early childhood mental health and reduce challenging behaviors, including reducing expulsions of preschool-aged children from birth to five for such behaviors (see also Section 2).

Describe:

MT embedded The Pyramid Model (PM) into its QRIS program and a training series of courses is required for program staff. A pilot coaching project was conducted and ongoing coaching of the PM to fidelity in QRIS programs is being developed through the 2015 RFP process for all continuing CCR & R services in MT. The Project LAUNCH grant has identified a pilot community to develop a system to support social emotional development for young children and families using the Pyramid Model and is in its second year of funding.

- ☒ Engaging parents and families in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways to expand their knowledge, skills, and capacity to become meaningful partners in supporting their children's positive development.

Describe:

MT does not have a specific course developed on this subject that is widely offered. However, ongoing training on cultural and linguistic diversity are included in each annual Professional Development Specialist Forum sponsored by the ECP and will be added to the annual Directors' Symposium training agenda in 2016. Higher education in ECE requires a class on meeting the needs of families and a diversity class. The Training Development Work Group will be addressing this need in their action plan to be created beginning February 1, 2016. Some training sponsors have developed a course for their regions on this topic that have been approved.

- ☒ Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence-based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the State/Territory Early Learning and Development Standards.

Describe:

All Montana courses approved by the Early Childhood Project must include the applicable subdomain and standard from the Montana Early Learning Standards, content area(s) from the Knowledge Base, as well how cultural diversity and inclusion are addressed within each course. Orientation training is in development and must align with the MELS and the Knowledge base in order to support consistency across courses. All courses must be evidence-based and informed by research and responsive to the needs of the communities and providers for all approved trainings state-wide. Course are delivered with multiple delivery styles i.e. in-person, online, and a combination of online and in-person which we refer to as a hybrid course.

- ☒ On-site or accessible comprehensive services for children and community partnerships that promote families' access to services that support their children's learning and development.

Describe:

MT has approved some courses that address community partnerships that promote families' access to services that support learning and development. The local early childhood councils provide a means for dissemination of information about available community resources and collaboration around cross-sector professional development. A diverse group of approved state level and community-based training sponsors offer courses for practitioners, such as county health departments, Part C Providers, school districts, family education and support agencies and other child and family non-profit organizations.

- ☒ Using data to guide program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement.

Describe:

The QRIS program requires assessments in the Environmental Rating Scales and the Program or Business Administration Scales and the scores are the basis for programs' Quality Improvement Plans (QIP). When the Pyramid Model Coaching is fully implemented beginning in April 2016, the scores from both the TPOT and TIPITOS assessments will also be used to guide QIPs. An annual conference for QRIS programs provides specialized training in using data from assessments to develop QIPs and budgets for use of QRIS incentive funds. Each year the agenda for the conference is based upon identified needs based upon QRIS data.

- ☐ Caring for children of families in geographic areas with significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment.

Describe:

- ☒ Caring for and supporting the development of children with disabilities and developmental delays.

Describe:

Montana has two Inclusion courses (both available for college credit) that are required training for QRIS programs. One of the Professional Development Incentive Award tracks is for completion of these two courses.

- ☐ Supporting positive development of school-age children.

Describe:

- ☐ Other.

Describe:

d) Check how the State/Territory connects child care providers with available Federal and State/Territory financial aid, or other resources for pursuing postsecondary education relevant for the early childhood and school-age workforce. Check all that apply.

- ☒ Coaches, mentors, consultants, or other specialists available to support access to postsecondary training including financial aid and academic counseling
- ☒ State/Territory-wide, coordinated, and easily accessible clearinghouse (i.e. online calendar or listing of opportunities) of relevant postsecondary education opportunities

☒ Financial awards (such as scholarships, grants, loans, reimbursement for expenses) from State/Territory for completion of postsecondary education

☐ Other.

Describe:

☐ No.

6.2.2 Does the State/Territory require a specific number of annual training hours for child care providers caring for children receiving CCDF subsidies and in particular content areas?

States and Territories are encouraged to consult with Caring for our Children for best practices and recommended time needed to address training hour requirements.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Yes. If yes, describe:

a) Licensed Center-Based Care

1) Number of pre-service or orientation hours and any required areas/content

Safe Sleep (2 hours) required for new providers serving children under age 2 prior to licensing approval and within 60 days of hire for all other staff.

2) Number of on-going hours and any required areas/content

15 hours/year of approved training for center directors and 8 hours/year for other staff.

b) Licensed Group Child Care Homes

1) Number of pre-service or orientation hours and any required areas/content

Orientation (2.5 hours) within first 60 days of operation. Safe Sleep (2 hours) required for new providers serving children under age 2 prior to licensing approval. First Aid and CPR for primary caregivers prior to approval.

2) Number of on-going hours and any required areas/content

8 hours/year of approved training.

c) Licensed Family Child Care Provider

1) Number of pre-service or orientation hours and any required areas/content

Orientation (2.5 hours) within first 60 days of operation. Safe Sleep (2hours) required

for new providers serving children under age 2 prior to licensing approval.

2) Number of on-going hours and any required areas/content

8 hours/year of approved training.

d) Any other eligible CCDF provider

1) Number of pre-service or orientation hours and any required areas/content

Legally Certified Provider (LCP) Orientation (4 hours online) within 60 days of approval.

2) Number of on-going hours and any required areas/content

N/A

☐ No

6.2.3 Describe the status of the State/Territory's policies and practices to strengthen provider's business practices.

Effective Date: 10/01/2016

☒ Fully implemented - as of March 1, 2016.

Describe the State strategies including training, education, and technical assistance to strengthen provider's business practices. This may include, but is not limited to, such practices related to fiscal management, budgeting, record-keeping, hiring, developing, and retaining qualified staff, risk management, community relationships, marketing and public relations, and parent-provider communications, including who delivers the training, education and/or technical assistance

The business practices trainings that MT currently offers (Program Administration Scale and Business Administration Scale) are available to all programs to take. These trainings are required for programs participating in the state QRIS. There is a supplemental training being developed called "Building and Maintaining a Successful Child Care Business" that will focus on policy writing and specific business practices such as the Iron Triangle, cost of care, budgets, risk management, and hiring/retaining quality staff. It is the intent to also include more specific business practice training within the curriculum that is being revised for New Provider Orientation. Programs participating in STARS to Quality must complete either the Program Administration (PAS) or Business Administration scale (BAS) training to achieve

STAR 1, as well as complete a self-assessment. To achieve STAR 2 through STAR 5, programs have a formal PAS/BAS assessment. At STAR 2, any subscale scores below a 2.0 must be addressed in the program's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). To achieve STAR 3, programs must meet a minimum of a 3.0 overall score and any subscales below a 3.0 must be addressed in the QIP. Programs must achieve a minimum of a 4.0 at STAR 4 and address subscale scores below a 4.0, and at STAR 5 programs must have a minimum 5.0 overall score and address any subscale scores below a 5.0. All STARS coaches are trained in these tools so that they may offer technical assistance to prepare for the assessment. MT is currently in the process of developing a supplemental training to be offered alongside the PAS and BAS training which will focus on policy writing and specific business practices that are not addressed in detail in the PAS and BAS trainings.

☐ Not implemented. The State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with the State/Territory lead agency to complete implementation of this activity

6.3 Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines

The CCDBG Act of 2014 added a requirement that the State/Territory will develop, maintain, or implement early learning and developmental guidelines that are appropriate for children in a forward progression from birth to kindergarten entry (i.e., birth-to-three, three-to-five, or birth-to-five), describing what such children should know and be able to do, and covering the essential domains of early childhood development for use State/Territory wide by child care providers. (658E(c)(2)(T)) At the option of the State/Territory, early learning and development guidelines for out-of-school time may be developed. States and Territories may use the quality set-aside as discussed in section 7 to improve on the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines.

6.3.1 Describe the status of the State's early learning and development guidelines appropriate for children from birth to kindergarten entry.

Effective Date: 10/01/2016

- ☒ The State assures that the early learning and development guidelines are:
- Research-based, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically appropriate, and aligned with entry to kindergarten
 - Implemented in consultation with the State educational agency and the State Advisory Council (SAC) or other state or state-designated cross-agency body if there is no SAC
 - Updated as determined by the State. List the date or frequency

Every 5 years.

- ☒ Fully implemented and meeting all Federal requirements outlined above - as of March 1, 2016. List the Lead Agency's policy citation(s) and describe using 6.3.2 through 6.3.4 below
- ☐ Not implemented. The State/Territory must provide a State/Territory-specific implementation plan for achieving compliance with this requirement, including planned activities, necessary legislative or regulatory steps to complete, and target completion date (no later than September 30, 2016). Please provide brief text responses and descriptions only. Do not cut and paste charts or tables here. Your responses will be consolidated electronically into an Implementation Plan summary report.

Overall Target Completion Date (no later than September 30, 2016)

Overall Status - Describe the State/Territory's overall status toward complete implementation for this requirement(s) (not yet started, partially implemented, substantially implemented, other)

Implemented requirement(s) - Identify any requirement(s) implemented to date if applicable

Tasks/Activities - What specific steps will you take to implement the unmet requirement (e.g., legislative or rule changes, modify agreements with coordinating agencies, etc.)

Projected start date for each activity:

Projected end date for each activity:

Agency - Who is responsible for complete implementation of this activity

Partners - Who is the responsible agency partnering with to complete implement this activity

6.3.2 Check for which age group(s) the State has established early learning and development guidelines:

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☐ Birth-to-three

Provide a link:

☐ Three-to-Five

Provide a link:

☒ Birth-to-Five

Provide a link:

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/DocumentsAndResources.aspx#207923176-montanas-early-learning-standards-mels>

- ☐ Five and older (check if State/Territory has standards for five and older that complement academic but cover child development areas not covered by k-12 academic standards).

Describe and provide a link:

- ☐ Other.

Describe:

6.3.3 Does the State/Territory use CCDF quality funds to improve on the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines by providing technical assistance to child care providers to enhance children's cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and support children's overall well-being?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- ☒ Yes, the State/Territory has a system of technical assistance operating State/Territory-wide
- ☐ Yes, the State/Territory has a system of technical assistance operating as a pilot or in a few localities
- ☐ No, but the State/Territory is in the development phase
- ☐ No, the State/Territory has no plans for development

a) If yes, check all that apply to the technical assistance and describe.

- ☒ Child care providers are supported in developing and implementing curriculum/learning activities based on the State's/Territory's early learning and development guidelines.

Describe:

MT's professional development program is coordinated through the Early Childhood Project with partners in child care resource and referral agencies and with other approved training sponsors statewide. All course approval requires alignment with specific Early Learning Standards and subdomains of the standards. Training is identified as such on the Statewide Training Calendar. The MT Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium is composed of early childhood faculty and most institutions utilize the MELS as part of appropriate course requirements. MT

CCR&R Professional Development Specialists have all been trained in the MELS. The MELS training was also the focus of the 2014 Annual Directors' Symposium sponsored by the ECP.

- ☒ The technical assistance is linked to the State's/Territory's quality rating and improvement system.

Describe:

A basic MELS course (6 hours) is required for QRIS programs' staff and is available on-line. Course approval requires training sponsors to identify specific MELS and subdomains that are addressed and that information is included on the Statewide Training Calendar posting of the event. Child care resource and referral agencies provide individualized technical assistance upon request.

- ☒ Child care providers working with infants and/or toddlers have access to the technical assistance for implementing early learning and development guidelines.

Describe:

MELS training and technical assistance is available to all practitioners in MT. Courses are identified by age group(s) addressed in the approval process and on the Statewide Training Calendar.

- ☒ Child care providers working with preschool-age children have access to the technical assistance for implementing early learning and development guidelines.

Describe:

MELS training and technical assistance is available to all practitioners in MT through the CCR & R agency in their region. Courses are identified by age group addressed in the approval process and on the Statewide Training Calendar.

- ☐ Child care providers working with school-age children have access to the technical assistance for implementing early learning and development guidelines.

Describe:

b) Indicate which funds are used for this activity (check all that apply)

- ☒ CCDF funds.

Describe CCDF funds (e.g., quality set-aside, infant-toddler set aside, etc.)

2.4 million dollars through June 2017 from the Montana State Legislature as one-time only funds to be spent in this biennium. These funds are designated solely for

STARS to Quality.

☒ Other funds.

Describe other funding sources (e.g., Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, state or local funds, etc.)

Montana Preschool Development Grant, MT Project LAUNCH, CSPD, and OPI funds.

6.3.4 Check here to demonstrate that State/Territory assures that CCDF funds will not be used to develop or implement an assessment for children that: (658E(c)(2)(T)(ii)(I))

- Will be the primary or sole basis to determine a child care provider ineligible to participate in the CCDF program
- Will be used as the primary or sole basis to provide a reward or sanction for an individual provider
- Will be used to deny children eligibility to participate in the CCDF program
- Will be used as the primary or sole method for assessing effectiveness of child care programs
- Will be used to deny children eligibility to participate in the CCDF program

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Yes.

7 Support Continuous Quality Improvement

Lead Agencies are required to reserve and use a portion of their Child Care and Development Block Grant funds for activities designed to improve the quality of child care services and increase parental options for, and access to, high-quality child care. Support for continuous quality improvement is expected to cover the entire age span of children supported by CCDF, from birth through age 12. States/Territories may provide these quality improvement activities directly, or through grants or contracts with local child care resource and referral organizations or other appropriate entities. The activities should be in alignment with a State/Territory-wide assessment of the State's/Territory's needs to carry out such services and care. These quality investments can align with, support and help sustain additional quality efforts developed under Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grants, Early Head Start/Head Start partnerships and other funding efforts.

States and Territories will report on these quality improvement investments through CCDF in three ways: 1) ACF will collect annual data on how much CCDF funding is spent on quality

activities using the expenditure report (ACF-696); 2) In the Plan, States and Territories will describe the types of activities supported by quality investments over the three-year period; and 3) For each three-year Plan period, States and Territories will submit a separate annual report that will show the measures used by the State/Territory to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services in the State/Territory.

The CCDBG Act of 2014 requires States and Territories to use the quality set-aside to fund at least one of the following 10 activities:

- 1) Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce (as described in Section 6)
- 2) Improving on the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines (as described in Section 6)
- 3) Developing, implementing, or enhancing a tiered quality rating system for child care providers and services
- 4) Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers
- 5) Establishing or expanding a Statewide system of child care resource and referral services (as described Section 1)
- 6) Supporting compliance with State/Territory requirements for licensing, inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety (as described in Section 5)
- 7) Evaluating the quality of child care programs in the State/Territory, including evaluating how programs positively impact children
- 8) Supporting providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation
- 9) Supporting the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development
- 10) Other activities to improve the quality of child care services as long as outcome measures relating to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry are possible.

Throughout this Plan, States and Territories will describe the types of quality improvement activities where CCDF investments are being made, including but not limited to, the quality set-aside funds. We recognize that for some areas, States and Territories may leverage other funds to support the quality improvement goals, which we encourage and support. For example, activities related to early learning and development guidelines may be supported by a

combination of CCDF and education funding. States and Territories continue to have such flexibility.

7.1 Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services

7.1.1 What are your overarching goals for quality improvement?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Please describe how the State/Territory selected these goals, including any data or the State/Territory-wide assessment of needs that identified the needs for quality improvement services

1.1.1 The overarching goals for quality improvement are to:

1. Increase support for infant/toddler care.
2. Encourage and assist programs to progress through the STARS to Quality Standards in order to achieve and maintain higher STAR levels to attain higher quality programs.
3. Increase the number of NAEYC or NAFCC accredited programs.
4. Increase participation in the Quality Rating and Improvement System by 100 participants by January 2017.

7.1.2 Check and describe which of the following specified quality improvement activities the State/Territory is investing in:

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Developing, implementing or enhancing a tiered quality rating system. If checked, respond to 7.2. Indicate which funds will be used for this activity (check all that apply)

☒ CCDF funds.

Describe CCDF funds (e.g., quality set-aside, infant-toddler set aside, etc.)

The STARS to Quality program, along with other quality initiatives will be supported through the 4% to 9% earmarked for quality out of the CCDF funding. Currently, we have devoted 7% to quality out of CCDF funds.

☒ Other funds.

Describe other funding sources (e.g., Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, state or local funds, etc.)

2.4 million dollars through June 2017 from the Montana State Legislature as one-time only funds to be spent in this biennium. These funds are designated solely for STARS to Quality.

☒ Improving the supply and quality of child care services for infants and toddlers. If checked, respond to 7.3. Indicate which funds will be used for this activity (check all that apply)

☒ CCDF funds.

Describe CCDF funds (e.g., quality set-aside, infant-toddler set aside, etc.)

Montana intends to support infant toddler care by continuing to offer the Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver course. The Infant Toddler Continuity of Care Stipend award and Infant Toddler Professional Development Incentive Awards (PDIAs) encourage providers to take these 60 hours of training which is specifically targeted to infants & toddlers. Instructors coach and observe these participants in their environments so that they can put into practice what they are learning throughout the course. The Continuity of Care stipend is designed to improve the quality of care for children at the child care programs where the caregivers who receive the Infant and Toddler Stipend are employed by encouraging continuity in these classrooms. In order to receive the stipend, the caregiver must continue to work in the same program for 18 months from the date of application, further ensuring the continuity of care for the children in these programs. In addition to the longevity requirement, participants must work a minimum of 5 hours per day, Monday through Friday, with infants & toddlers, in order to receive the Continuity of Care stipend. By holding an Infant Toddler Instructor Intensive, which is a 'train the trainer' course for Infant/Toddler instructors, the Lead Agency ensures that there are a sufficient number of instructors to continue offering this course statewide. The Lead Agency also intends to support infant/toddler care by:

1. Increasing the reimbursement rate for the Best Beginnings Scholarship program for infants.
2. Developing an Infant Toddler Specialist Network.
3. Offer a mini-grant for programs participating in STARS to Quality to improve outdoor learning environments which includes additional funding for infant and toddler outdoor play areas.
4. Provide funding to support the accreditation process through NAEYC and NAFCC thereby increasing standards for infant and toddler care.
5. Supporting the increase in minimum health and safety standards through child care licensing rules will further support infant and toddler

care.

☒ Other funds.

Describe other funding sources (e.g., Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, state or local funds, etc.)

2.4 million dollars through June 2017 from the Montana State Legislature as one-time only funds to be spent in this biennium. These funds are designated solely for STARS to Quality.

☐ Establishing or expanding a statewide system of CCR&R services as discussed in 1.7. If checked, respond to 7.4. Indicate which funds will be used for this activity (check all that apply)

☐ CCDF funds.

Describe CCDF funds (e.g., quality set-aside, infant-toddler set aside, etc.)

☐ Other funds.

Describe other funding sources (e.g., Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, state or local funds, etc.)

☒ Facilitating compliance with State/Territory requirements for inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety standards (as described in Section 5). If checked, respond to 7.5. Indicate which funds will be used for this activity (check all that apply)

☒ CCDF funds.

Describe CCDF funds (e.g., quality set-aside, infant-toddler set aside, etc.)

Orientation for new providers as well as new caregivers will require training specific to health and safety standards. The Child Care Licensing Program has Interpretive Guidelines available for providers. This document will assist child care providers and staff in a caregiving role in developing a better understanding of the regulations as well as what is observed by the licensor during an inspection and how the licensor measures compliance to the regulation. It can also be used as a training resource for new and existing provider staff in a caregiving role. The Lead Agency has contracted to develop a Montana child care licensing companion book. This will be designed to put child care regulations into language that can be easily understood. Training will be developed for providers that supports the guidebook. Orientation for new providers as well as new caregivers will require training specific to health and safety standards.

☐ Other funds.

Describe other funding sources (e.g., Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, state or local funds, etc.)

☐ Evaluating and assessing the quality and effectiveness of child care services within the State/Territory. If checked, respond to 7.6. Indicate which funds will be used for this activity (check all that apply)

☐ CCDF funds.

Describe CCDF funds (e.g., quality set-aside, infant-toddler set aside, etc.)

☐ Other funds.

Describe other funding sources (e.g., Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, state or local funds, etc.)

☒ Supporting accreditation. If checked, respond to 7.7. Indicate which funds will be used for this activity (check all that apply)

☒ CCDF funds.

Describe CCDF funds (e.g., quality set-aside, infant-toddler set aside, etc.)

Scholarships are available to offset costs of programs working towards accreditation. Montana is working on developing Accreditation specialists that will be available to assist programs through the process as well. Currently accredited programs (through either NAEYC or NAFCC) in MT were surveyed to gather information on successes and challenges of the accreditation process. This information will be used, in addition to other resources, to write a request for proposals from active STARS participants for accreditation support.

☒ Other funds.

Describe other funding sources (e.g., Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, state or local funds, etc.)

2.4 million dollars through June 2017 from the Montana State Legislature as one-time only funds to be spent in this biennium. These funds are designated solely for STARS to Quality.

☐ Supporting State/Territory or local efforts to develop high-quality program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development. If checked, respond to 7.8. Indicate which funds will be used for this activity (check all that apply)

☐ CCDF funds.

Describe CCDF funds (e.g., quality set-aside, infant-toddler set aside, etc.)

☐ Other funds.

Describe other funding sources (e.g., Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, state or local funds, etc.)

☐ Other activities determined by the State/Territory to improve the quality of child care services, and for which measurement of outcomes related to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or entry into kindergarten is possible. If checked, respond to 7.9. Indicate which funds will be used for this activity (check all that apply)

☐ CCDF funds.

Describe CCDF funds (e.g., quality set-aside, infant-toddler set aside, etc.)

☐ Other funds.

Describe other funding sources (e.g., Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, state or local funds, etc.)

7.2 Quality Rating and Improvement System

7.2.1 Does your State/Territory have a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS)?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Yes, the State/Territory has a QRIS operating State/Territory-wide.

Describe how the QRIS is administered (e.g., state or locally administered such as through CCR&Rs) and provide a link, if available

Montana's QRIS, Best Beginnings STARS to Quality, is a voluntary quality rating improvement system that aligns quality indicators with support and incentives for early childhood programs and early childhood professionals. Best Beginnings STARS to Quality is

a five tiered program aimed at improving and measuring quality in early childhood care and education in Montana. Programs that advance levels are eligible for financial incentives, including higher reimbursement rates over the base rate for programs that serve children receiving Best Beginnings Scholarships. In order to receive a STAR level, programs must demonstrate through an application process that they are meeting all criteria at the level applying for, as well as all levels below. There is a strong emphasis on professionalism and professional development throughout the standards, with each level building on the prior level. All programs applying for STAR 2 and above receive the appropriate Environment Rating Scale assessment (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised, Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised, Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised) and either the Program Administration Scale assessment (centers) or the Business Administration Scale assessment (family and group programs). Programs must be accredited or a Head Start program in order to achieve the highest level of STAR 5. STARS to Quality is administered at the state level through the Lead Agency however Child Care Resource & Referral agencies are contracted to administer coaching and technical assistance to participating programs. The STARS Application site, where all programs must enter program information and submit to request assessments and apply for STAR levels is housed on The Early Childhood Project database. STARS to Quality began with 100 programs in a field test in 2010. The field test ended in April 2014 and STARS to Quality became available statewide for any licensed program to apply at any time. For more information regarding Best Beginnings STARS to Quality, visit stars.mt.gov.

☐ Yes, the State/Territory has a QRIS operating as a pilot, in a few localities, or only a few levels

Provide a link, if available

☐ No, but the State/Territory is in the development phase

☐ No, the State/Territory has no plans for development

a) If yes, check all that apply to your QRIS.

☒ Participation is voluntary

☐ Participation is mandatory for providers serving children receiving subsidy.

If checked, describe the relationship between QRIS participation and subsidy (minimum rating required, participation at any level, etc.)

- ☐ Participation is required for all providers
- ☒ Includes nationally-recognized accreditation as a way to meet/achieve QRIS rating levels
- ☒ Supports and assesses the quality of child care providers in the State/Territory
- ☒ Builds on State/Territory licensing standards and other State/Territory regulatory standards for such providers
- ☐ Embeds licensing into the QRIS.

Describe:

- ☒ Designed to improve the quality of different types of child care providers and services
- ☒ Describes the safety of child care facilities
- ☒ Addresses the business practices of programs
- ☒ Builds the capacity of State/Territory early childhood programs and communities to promote parents' and families' understanding of the State/Territory's early childhood system and the ratings of the programs in which the child is enrolled
- ☒ Provides, to the maximum extent practicable, financial incentives and other supports designed to expand the full diversity of child care options and help child care providers improve the quality of services.

If checked, please describe how these financial options link to responses in Section 4.3 related to higher payment rates tied to quality

STARS to Quality programs receive tiered reimbursement for serving children on the Best Beginnings Scholarship (subsidy) as well as incremental incentives that are encouraged to be used directly for program support and staff retention. Incentives are not to be incorporated into the daily operational budget of any program. Programs must allocate a certain percentage, dependent on STAR level, towards Personnel.

- ☒ Can be used to track trends in whether children receiving subsidy are utilizing rated care settings and level of rating

b) If yes, which types of settings or distinctive approaches to early childhood education and care participate in the State's/Territory's QRIS? Check all that apply.

- ☒ Licensed child care centers
- ☒ Licensed family child care homes
- ☐ License-exempt providers

- ☒ Early Head Start programs
- ☒ Head Start programs
- ☐ State pre-kindergarten or preschool program
- ☐ Local district supported pre-kindergarten programs
- ☒ Programs serving infants and toddlers
- ☒ Programs serving school-age children
- ☐ Faith-based settings
- ☐ Other.

Describe:

7.2.2 Describe the measures relevant to this activity that the State/Territory will use to evaluate the State/Territory's progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services in the State/Territory.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

Environmental Rating Scales, Program Administration Scale, and the Business Administration Scale are completed in STARS to Quality programs. These scales measure progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services. STARS programs receive a baseline when they join and then receive a formal assessment at STAR 2 and every subsequent level. This information is shared with the program to make necessary changes as the scale indicates to increase quality through a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The QIP must be developed based on the self-assessment and program goals.

7.3 Improving the Supply and Quality of Child Care Programs and Services for Infants and Toddlers

The CCDBG Act of 2014 included changes targeted at improving the supply and quality of infant-toddler care. Lead Agencies are encouraged to systematically assess and improve the overall quality of care infants and toddlers receive, the systems in place or needed to support and enhance the quality of infant and toddler providers and the capacity of the infant and toddler workforce to meet the unique needs of very young children, and the methods in place to

increase the proportion of infants and toddlers in higher quality care.

7.3.1 What activities are being implemented by the State/Territory to improve the supply (see also section 4) and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers?

Check all that apply and describe.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- ☐ Establishing or expanding high-quality community or neighborhood-based family and child development centers, which may serve as resources to child care providers in order to improve the quality of early childhood services provided to infants and toddlers from low-income families and to help eligible child care providers improve their capacity to offer high-quality, age-appropriate care to infants and toddlers from low-income families.

Describe:

- ☐ Establishing or expanding the operation of community or neighborhood-based family child care networks.

Describe:

- ☒ Providing training and professional development to promote and expand child care providers' ability to provide developmentally appropriate services for infants and toddlers.

Describe:

The STARS to Quality program requires primary caregivers at STAR 3 to complete the 60 hour Certified Infant-Toddler Caregiver course. This course is available to all caregivers, regardless if they are participating in STARS to Quality. There is a course completion award and continuity of care stipend attached to this course to encourage participation and completion. The LEAD AGENCY will be offering an Outdoor Environments mini-grant to STARS programs. Programs asking to develop infant/toddler outdoor spaces will receive additional funding. A training to support this mini-grant will be required of awardees and will be available to all providers regardless if they are participating in STARS to Quality. The following courses contain course objectives specific to serving infants and toddlers in care and are available to all providers: Montana Early Learning Standards, Montana blended Pyramid Model, Inclusion I: Foundations for Inclusion, and Inclusion II: Strategies for Inclusion.

- ☐ Providing financial incentives (including the use of grants and contracts as discussed in section 4) to increase the supply and quality of infant-toddler care.

Describe:

- ☐ Providing coaching and/or technical assistance on this age group's unique needs from Statewide networks of qualified infant-toddler specialists.

Describe:

- ☐ Coordinating with early intervention specialists who provide services for infants and toddlers with disabilities under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.)

Describe:

- ☒ Developing infant and toddler components within the State's/Territory's QRIS.

Describe:

The STARS to Quality program uses the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale and the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale to assess environments serving this age group. Programs receive a baseline score and work to improve their scores as they progress through STAR levels. Programs must use a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to address low scoring areas.

- ☒ Developing infant and toddler components within the State's/Territory's child care licensing regulations.

Describe:

The Child Care Licensing regulations specifically address infant and toddler care separate from other age groups.

- ☒ Developing infant and toddler components within the early learning and development guidelines.

Describe:

The Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS) have been revised to be inclusive of birth through five year old children. The MELS include four core domains, which are: Emotional and Social, Physical, Communication, and Cognition.

- ☐ Improving the ability of parents to access transparent and easy to understand consumer information about high-quality infant and toddler care.

Describe:

- ☐ Carrying out other activities determined by the State/Territory to improve the quality of infant and toddler care provided in the State/Territory, and for which there is evidence that the activities will lead to improved infant and toddler health and safety, infant and toddler cognitive and physical development, or infant and toddler well-being.

Describe:

- ☐ Other.

Describe:

7.3.2 Describe the measures relevant to this activity that the State/Territory will use to evaluate the State's progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services in the State/Territory

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

The Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program is a voluntary quality rating improvement system that aligns quality indicators with support and incentives for early childhood programs and early childhood professionals. All STARS to Quality programs in Montana must be assessed at STAR 2 and above using the following tools to measure quality:

- Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-R, ECERS-R and FCCERS-R)
- Program Administration Scale, and
- Business Administration Scale.

To achieve STAR 3 and above, programs must meet specific scores within these tools.

Based on the scores required at STAR 3, the ECSB considers STAR 3 above to be an indicator of a quality program. These scales are valid and reliable assessments that allow programs to be scored and compared as a measure of quality improvement above and beyond the minimum child care licensing standards in Montana.

7.4 Child Care Resource & Referral

7.4.1 Describe the status of the child care resource and referral system

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- ☒ State/Territory has a CCR&R system operating State/Territory-wide.

Describe how the CCR&R system is operated, including how many agencies and if there is a statewide network and how the system is coordinated and if it is voluntary

A statewide referral program is divided into seven regions throughout the state. Each regional office offers consumer education, maintains NACCRRAware for referral support, and provides individualized referrals for parents seeking child care. This is available through the individual Child Care Resource & Referral [CCR&R] websites and their toll free phone number. CCR&Rs can provide local support for scholarship families in finding child care and have dedicated computer and phone lines for the public use. Additionally, CCR&Rs also do consumer education on a local community level.

- ☐ State/Territory has a CCR&R system operating in a few localities but not fully operating State/Territory-wide

Describe:

- ☐ State/Territory is in the development phase

7.4.2 Describe the measures relevant to this activity that the State/Territory will use to evaluate the State/Territory's progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services in the State/Territory

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

The CCR&Rs provide services that specifically focus on the MT QRIS, STARS to Quality.

These services include:

- Technical assistance on all STARS to Quality criteria as well as the STARS Application site in which programs must track how they are meeting all criteria in order to submit for a level; Pyramid Model classroom coaching;
- Facilitation of STARS to Quality courses which include the MT Blended Pyramid Model Modules and the 60-hour Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver course and the 60-hour Certified Preschool Teacher course.

To measure and evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services, the following data will be used:

1. Course evaluations completed by STARS to Quality child care providers on STARS to Quality courses;
2. Monthly classroom training hours for all STARS related trainings offered; and
3. Coaching and technical assistance hours provided by CCR&Rs on specific information areas such as family and community partnerships, leadership and program management, and environments for care and learning.

7.5 Facilitating Compliance with State Standards

7.5.1 What strategies does your State/Territory fund with CCDF quality funds to facilitate child care providers' compliance with State/Territory requirements for inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety, and with State/Territory licensing standards?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

A pre-service training will be developed in order to provide basic training to all new providers seeking to be licensed as well as new employees of an existing program. The Quality Assurance Division (QAD) will offer training and technical assistance to providers that have serious deficiencies. This is under development and being led by Child Care Licensing within QAD.

Currently, STAR 1 trainings provide information to support the compliance of health and safety standards and STARS participants must maintain their valid child care license in order to be in STARS. These trainings are available to programs outside of the STARS programs as well as all STARS to Quality trainings are available free of charge to all licensed providers and include training in health and safety.

Professional Development Specialists with the CCR&R agencies are available for technical assistance for all programs as needed and requested, as well.

7.5.2 Describe the measures relevant to this activity that the State will use to evaluate the State/Territory's progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services in the State/Territory

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

Compliance of the child care regulations is determined through monitoring inspections. The child care regulations are minimum health and safety standards required in order for a facility to be licensed. The STARS to Quality program includes standards above and beyond the minimum required by child care licensing. Many of the trainings currently required in STAR 1 will be included in the pre-service orientation through child care licensing. This will require adjustments at all STAR levels to be sure they include topics and trainings that gradually build on the minimum requirements. Other measures that are used throughout the STARS to Quality program include the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale, and the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale. These rating scales along with the Program Administration Scale and the Business Administration Scale are used to determine quality for programs involved in STARS. Programs accepted into STARS receive a baseline and ongoing assessments. This process provides the Early Childhood Services Bureau the means to measure the progress of quality improvement in STARS to Quality programs.

7.6 Evaluating and Assessing the Quality and Effectiveness of Child Care Programs and Services

7.6.1 One of the purposes of the CCDBG Act of 2014 is to increase the number and percentage of low-income children in high-quality child care settings.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe how the State/Territory measures the quality and effectiveness of child care programs and services offered in the State/Territory, including any tools used to measure child, family, teacher, classroom, or provider improvements, and how the State/Territory evaluates that such programs positively impact children

Montana uses the following instruments to measure child, family, teacher, classroom, and provider improvements within the STARS to Quality programs. In Montana, there are trained and reliable individuals available for all of the following tools:

- TPOT - Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT™) for Preschool Classrooms. It is an instrument designed to measure early childhood practitioners' implementation of teaching and behavior support practices associated with the Pyramid (taken from Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool for preschool classrooms manual, research edition/ by M.L Hemmerter, Ph.D., Lise Fox, Ph. D., and Patricia Snyder, Ph.D. Copyright© 2014 by Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.).
- TPITOS - Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS). The TPITOS is an assessment instrument designed to measure the fidelity of implementation of practices associated with the Pyramid Model in infant and toddler care settings. The purpose of the TPITOS is to provide a classroom snapshot of the adult behaviors and classroom environment variables that are associated with supporting and promoting the social-emotional development of infants and toddlers (taken from The Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation Scale manual Copyright ©2009. All rights reserved.)
- ECERS-R - The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ECERS-R). The ECERS-R is a revision of the ECERS, designed to assess group programs for preschool-kindergarten aged children, from 2 through 5 years of age. The scale consists of 43 items organized into 7 subscales: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interactions, Program Structure, and Parents and Staff.
- FCCERS-R -The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R) is designed to assess family child care programs conducted in a provider's home. The Scale consists of 37 items organized into 7 subscales: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, and Parents and Provider. This scale also accommodates the wider age range often found in family child care programs and provides a deeper focus on sensitivity to cultural and socioeconomic diversity.
- ITERS-R - The Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised is designed to assess group programs for children from birth to 2 ½ years of age. The scale consists of 39 items organized into 7 subscales: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, and Parents and Staff.

7.6.2 Describe the measures relevant to this activity that the State/Territory will use to evaluate the State/Territory's progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services in the State/Territory

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

- The Lead Agency will collect the scores of all of the Environment Rating Scales and measure progress of STAR Level 3, 4, and 5 programs within a determined time period. Programs must achieve a certain score within the Environment Rating Scales in order to advance levels from STAR 2 and up.
- The amount of programs receiving STAR 3, 4, and 5 will be a measure toward achieving the quality of child care.
- The Early Childhood Project collect scores of the TPOT and TPITOS to measure progress within a determined time period.

7.7 Accreditation Support

7.7.1 Does the State/Territory support child care providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation by a national accrediting body with demonstrated, valid, and reliable program standards of high quality?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Yes, the State/Territory has supports operating State/Territory-wide.

Describe the supports for all types of accreditation the State/Territory provides to child care centers and family child care homes to achieve accreditation

NAEYC and NAFCC scholarships are available through ECP for all licensed child care providers in Montana. The Early Childhood Services Bureau will develop a Request For Proposal (RFP) for accreditation support in Montana. This RFP will be requesting proposals from subject matter experts to support cohorts of interested and eligible

STARS to Quality programs through the NAEYC and NAFCC accreditation process. The Early Childhood Services Bureau also plans to provide funding support for this process to individual programs eligible to seek accreditation. STAR Level 5 is equal to accreditation. The RFP will be released by September 30, 2016.

- ☐ Yes, the State/Territory has supports operating as a pilot or in a few localities

Describe:

- ☐ No, but the State/Territory is in the development phase
- ☐ No, the State/Territory has no plans for development

7.7.2 Describe the measures relevant to this activity that the State/Territory will use to evaluate the State/Territory's progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services in the State/Territory

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

The Lead Agency will use the following criteria to evaluate progress in improving quality of child care programs and services in Montana:

- Number of NAEYC and NAFCC accredited programs that reach a STAR 5 level
- Number of programs accessing and using available funds through the Early Childhood Project accreditation scholarships
- Number of STARS programs accessing and using available funds through the Early Childhood Project accreditation scholarships
- Number of STARS to Quality programs seeking NAEYC and NAFCC accreditation through the accreditation RFP
- Number of new programs NAEYC or NAFCC accredited in Montana (baseline set on October 22, 2015)
- Number of STAR 5 programs in STARS to Quality

7.8 Program Standards

7.8.1 What other State/Territory or local efforts, if any, is the State/Territory supporting to develop or adopt high-quality program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development?

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Please describe:

The following efforts are under development to support high-quality program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development:

- Infant/Toddler Consultant
- Outdoor Environments mini-grant for STARS to Quality programs including a training accessible for all providers in Montana
- The Lead Agency partners with the Chronic Disease Bureau/Nutrition and Physical Activity program on a grant to provide training called I Am Moving; I am Learning which focuses on physical activity in child care. A train the trainer option will be offered to build capacity for on-going training in Montana.

7.8.2 Describe the measures relevant to this activity that the State/Territory will use to evaluate the State/Territory's progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services in the State/Territory

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

- Infant/Toddler Consultant: This project is under development and criteria to evaluate this will be determined prior to launching.
- Outdoor Environments mini-grant for STARS to Quality programs evaluation criteria includes: number of programs receiving awards, number of programs participating in trainings, type of plans created, timeframe for completion of projects, and the number of non-STARS programs accessing the training.
- I Am Moving; I Am Learning training evaluation criteria includes: number of participants, the type of programs participating, role types of participants, number of participants completing training, and the number of STARS and non-STARS programs participating.
- STARS to Quality trainings will continue to be available to providers in Montana whether or not they are participating in STARS to Quality and data collected and

evaluated includes: number of STARS providers signing up for trainings, number of STARS providers completing training, role types of providers signing up for and completing training

7.9 Other Quality Improvement Activities

7.9.1 List and describe any other activities the State/Territory provides to improve the quality of child care services and describe the measures relevant to this activity that the State/Territory will use to evaluate the State/Territory's progress in improving provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or entry into kindergarten.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

N/A

8 Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability

Under CCDF, program integrity and accountability activities are grounded in the State/Territory's policies for implementing the CCDF program. For error rate activities, reviews are based on the State/Territory's own CCDF policies. The CCDBG Act of 2014 made sweeping changes to the program requirements. With these changes, the State/Territory has an opportunity to change their own policies to reduce the burden for participants and staff as they build in safeguards to maintain program integrity. For example, the new law focuses on eligibility requirements at the time of eligibility determination and allows for a minimum 12-month period of eligibility before redetermination, which lessens the need for participants to continually provide documentation. This, in turn, relieves the State/Territory from the burden of constantly "checking" on participants which can open the door for miscalculations, lost paperwork, and other errors.

Lead Agencies are required to have accountability measures in place to ensure integrity and to identify fraud or other program violations. These accountability measures should address administrative error, including unintentional agency error, as well as program violations, both

unintentional and intentional. Violations may or may not result in further action by the Lead Agency, including those cases suspected of and/or prosecuted for fraud.

8.1 Program Integrity

8.1.1 Describe how the State ensures that their definitions for violations have been modified, staff trained, and program integrity procedures revised to reflect new requirements.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

A review of all current policies in the Child Care Policy Manual and Administrative Rules of Montana has been completed to where additional policy changes are needed to match the definitions in the CCDF Reauthorization Act of 2014. Montana will conduct 4 trainings per year for its contracting staff that conduct eligibility for families or supervisor such staff. In addition, Montana has implemented training on its database [CCUBS] functions to be held at a minimum bi-monthly or a maximum of quarterly.

Training topics include procedures around eligibility requirements for families, invoicing and program integrity for providers, aspects of the error rate process including corrections for errors, overpayment processing, intentional program violations and improper payment violations, and the Fair Hearing appeal process. New staff must complete an Eligibility Basics online course [an advanced version is currently under development]. Supervisors must review 100% of cases worked by new staff for the first 90 days of employment and 10% of all cases during the second 90 days of employment.

8.1.2 Describe how the State/Territory ensures that all staff are informed and trained regarding changes made to its policies and procedures to reflect new CCDF requirements.

Check all that apply.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

- ☒ Issue policy change notices
- ☒ Issue new policy manual
- ☒ Staff training
 - ☐ Orientations
 - ☒ Onsite training
 - ☒ Online training
- ☒ Regular check-ins to monitor implementation of the new policies.

Describe:

Montana conducts monthly case reviews outside its reporting year using the same process and documents as those used during the reporting year. In addition, Montana will continue to conduct annual Eligibility Forums around applications and payment processing. Montana will also utilize quarterly touch-base meetings using a WebEx format to review case file review findings as well as obtain input on needed process changes.

☐ Other.

Describe:

8.1.3 Describe the processes the Lead Agency will use to monitor all sub-recipients, including those described in Section 1, such as licensing agencies, child care resource and referral agencies, and others with a role in administering CCDF.

The Lead Agency is responsible for ensuring effective internal controls over the administration of CCDF funds. Lead Agencies that use other governmental or non-governmental sub-recipients to administer the program must have written agreements in place outlining roles and responsibilities for meeting CCDF requirements.

Definition: "Subrecipient means a non-Federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a Federal program; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. A subrecipient may also be a recipient of other Federal awards directly from a Federal awarding agency (2 CFR 200.93). Two CFR Part 200, Subpart A provides additional information on contractors (which may be referred to as "vendors"). The description of monitoring must include, but is not limited to, a description of the written agreements used, a schedule for completing the tasks, a budget which itemizes categorical expenditures consistent with CCDF requirements and indicators or measures to assess performance. Additional items for discussion may include: fiscal management, review of policies

and procedures to ensure compliance with CCDF regulations, and monitoring/auditing contractors or grantees to ensure that eligible children are served and eligibility documentation is verified."

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

Describe:

Montana will continue to conduct annual contract monitoring processes that include the use of a risk tool to determine the factors that might influence the level of monitoring used. Such factors include A-133 audited weaknesses, fiscal findings, and performance reports.

8.1.4 Describe the activities the Lead Agency has in place to identify program violations and administrative error to ensure program integrity using the series of questions below. Program violations may include intentional and unintentional client and/or provider violations as defined by the Lead Agency.

Administrative error refers to areas identified through the Error Rate Review process. Lead Agencies are required to have processes in place to identify fraud or other program violations.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) Check which activities the Lead Agency has chosen to conduct to identify unintentional or intentional program violations.

☐ Share/match data from other programs (e.g., TANF, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Medicaid) or other databases (e.g., State Directory of New Hires, Social Security Administration, Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS))

☒ Run system reports that flag errors (include types)

Describe:

The Child Care Under the Big Sky [CCUBS] data base allows for reports on block billing to be generated to monitor when providers invoice the subsidy program with little to no variation in hours in attendance over a 30 day period and monthly thereafter.

☒ Review of enrollment documents, attendance or billing records

☒ Conduct supervisory staff reviews or quality assurance reviews

☒ Audit provider records

☒ Train staff on policy and/or audits

☐ Other.

Describe:

☐ None.

Describe what measures the Lead Agency plans to put in place to address program integrity along with action steps and completion timelines:

b) Check which activities the Lead Agency has chosen to conduct to identify administrative error.

☐ Share/match data from other programs (e.g., TANF, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Medicaid) or other databases (e.g., State Directory of New Hires, Social Security Administration, Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS))

☒ Run system reports that flag errors (include types)

Describe:

When administrative errors are discovered during the Administrative Review and Fair Hearing process, all data entered in the CCUBS system are reviewed for accuracy.

☒ Review of enrollment documents, attendance or billing records

☒ Conduct supervisory staff reviews or quality assurance reviews

☒ Audit provider records

☒ Train staff on policy and/or audits

☒ Other.

Describe:

Montana conducts a review of work conducted by eligibility staff supervisors on a quarterly basis during non-reporting years.

☐ None.

Describe what measures the Lead Agency plans to put in place to address program integrity along with action steps and completion timelines:

8.1.5 Which activities (or describe under "Other") the Lead Agency will use to investigate and collect improper payments due to program violations or administrative error as defined in your State/Territory?

The Lead Agency has the flexibility to recover misspent funds as a result of errors. The Lead Agency is required to recover misspent funds as a result of fraud.

Effective Date: 06/01/2016

a) Check which activities (or describe under "Other") the Lead Agency will use for unintentional program violations?

- ☒ Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount in improper payment.

Identify the minimum dollar amount: 100.00

- ☐ Coordinate with and refer to other State/Territory agency (e.g., State/Territory collection agency, law enforcement)
- ☒ Recover through repayment plans
- ☒ Reduce payments in subsequent months
- ☒ Recover through State/Territory tax intercepts
- ☐ Recover through other means
- ☐ Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments.

Describe:

- ☐ Other.

Describe:

- ☐ None.

Describe what measures the Lead Agency plans to put in place to address the investigation and recovery of misspent funds due to unintentional program violations, including action steps and completion timelines

b) Check which activities the Lead Agency will use for intentional program violations or fraud?

- ☒ Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount in improper payment.

Identify the minimum dollar amount: 100.00

- ☐ Coordinate with and refer to other State/Territory agency (e.g., State/Territory collection agency, law enforcement)
- ☒ Recover through repayment plans
- ☒ Reduce payments in subsequent months
- ☒ Recover through State/Territory tax intercepts
- ☐ Recover through other means
- ☐ Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments.

Describe composition of unit below

- ☐ Other.

Describe:

- ☐ None.

Describe what measures the Lead Agency plans to put in place to address the investigation and recovery of misspent funds due to fraud, include action steps and completion timelines:

c) Check which activities the Lead Agency will use for administrative error?

- ☐ Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount in improper payment.

Identify the minimum dollar amount:

- ☐ Coordinate with and refer to other State/Territory agency (e.g., State/Territory collection agency, law enforcement)
- ☐ Recover through repayment plans
- ☐ Reduce payments in subsequent months
- ☐ Recover through State/Territory tax intercepts
- ☐ Recover through other means
- ☐ Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments.

Describe composition of unit below

☐ Other.

Describe:

☒ None.

Describe what measures the Lead Agency plans to put in place to address the investigation and recovery of misspent funds due to administrative error, including action steps and completion timelines

An administrative error does not require an investigation or recovery of misspent funds.

8.1.6 What type of sanction will the Lead Agency place on clients and providers to help reduce improper payments due to program violations?

The Lead Agency is required to impose sanctions on clients and providers in response to fraud.
Effective Date: 06/01/2016

☒ Disqualify client.

If checked, please describe, including a description of the appeal process for clients who are disqualified:

In its Administrative Rules, Montana can issue an Intentional Program Violation [IPV] whether an overpayment is issued or not. Clients can be disqualified from participation after the second IPV. Clients can appeal this issuance of an IPV. If the initial decision from an Administrative Review is considered unresolved, the client can request a Fair Hearing. Such hearings are conducted by Administrative Law Judges in the Department's Office of Fair Hearings.

☒ Disqualify provider.

If checked, please describe, including a description of the appeal process for providers who are disqualified:

In its Administrative Rules, Montana can issue an Intentional Program Violation [IPV] whether an overpayment is issued or not. Clients can be disqualified from participation after the second IPV. Clients can appeal this issuance of an IPV. If the initial decision from an Administrative Review is considered unresolved, the client can request a Fair Hearing. Such hearings are conducted by Administrative Law Judges in the Department of Public Health and Human Services' Office of Fair Hearings.

☐ Prosecute criminally

☐ Other.

Describe: